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Biography.

To the Editors of the Panoplist.

GENTLEMEN,

DESIROUS of paying a tribute of respect to the memory of a good and useful man, who exhibited through life, an example worthy of imitation; and at the request of a respectable member and officer in the church founded by the Rev. Mr. Moorhead, I take the liberty to enclose the following sketches of his life.

In my youth, I was well acquainted with him, though he was then considerably advanced in years. From information of some of his aged acquaintances and my own knowledge, I have collected the following account of him. It is imperfect, because little is known of the early periods of his life. His contemporaries have long since deceased, and the few writings which he left, were lost in the siege of Boston. Very respectfully yours, &c.

D. M.

MEMOIRS OF REV. JOHN MOORHEAD,

FIRST MINISTER AND FOUNDER OF A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN BOSTON.

ABOUT the year 1729, a number of Protestant, Presbyterian families from the North of Ireland, came to Boston. They were from the counties of Londonderry, Donnegall, Antrim and Down. The motives inducing a removal from their native country, were the enhanced price of their leased lands, ecclesiastical oppression, the prospect of the acquisition of property here; but chiefly that they might enjoy religious and civil liberty, in this land of freedom. They were a company of religious, moral and industrious people. They met with opposition at their landing, and patiently suffered the insults of the misinformed *rabble*. Some were opposed to their reception into the town, ignorantly imag-

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ining, that, as they came from Ireland, they must necessarily be Papists. But the truth was, that the Protestant sect, to which those strangers belonged, had suffered far more dreadfully by the Papists in Ireland, in plunderings, massacres, and all the horrors of persecution, than the fathers of New England ever had, by all the oppressions of the English hierarchy, conducted by the sanguinary bishop Laud and his associates.

They were generally descendants of ancestors, who emigrated from Scotland to Ireland, in the reign of king James I.; and settled in the north part of the Island, which had been conquered, and the estates confiscated, by his predecessor Queen Elizabeth.

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Hence they were called Scotch Irish.

On their admittance into Boston, their first care was to procure a place for the peaceable worship of Almighty God, according to his word. They purchased a lot of land in Bury street, cornering on Federal street, then called Long Lane. Either before they left Ireland, or on their arrival, they invited Mr. Moorhead to be their minister, and he arrived in Boston, soon after them.

Mr. Moorhead was born in Newton, near Belfast, in the county of Down, of pious and respectable parents. His father, who was a farmer, gave him the best advantages within his power, for improvement in learning. He finished his education at one of the universities in Scotland. He came to Boston about the twenty-third year of his age. There is no record of his ordination.* This little colony of Christians, for some time, carried on the public worship of God in a barn, which stood on the lot which they had purchased. In this humble temple, with uplifted hearts and

* About the time of the arrival of Mr. Moorhead's flock, a considerable number of families, with three or four ministers, also came over from Ireland, and fixed down in different parts of the country. Particularly, the Rev. John M'Kinstry, who with his people, in 1730, began the settlement of Ellington, (in Connecticut) then called Windsor Goshen. The Rev. Mr. Abercrombie, who, with a number of families, settled in Pelham; several at Coleraine, and also in the North Society in East Windsor, and at Brookfield. The Rev. James M'Gregore, with a considerable congregation, in 1719, began the settlement of Londonderry, in New-Hampshire. He was succeeded by Rev. Matthew Clarke in 1729.

voices, they worshipped and honoured *Him*, who, for our salvation, condescended to be born in a stable.

As the congregation increased, by migrations from Ireland and Scotland, they enlarged the place of worship, by adding two wings to the lowly building. The present commodious and decent edifice was built Anno 1744.

The first meeting of the brethren, with their minister, for the election of Elders, according to the discipline of the Church of Scotland, was at the house of John Little, in Milk Street, July 14th, 1730.

The Elders then chosen, were John Young, Robert Patton, Samuel M'Clure, Richard M'Clure, and Thomas M'Mullen, who were solemnly consecrated to that office.

In doctrine, worship and discipline, the church was formed according to the model of the Presbyterian church of Scotland. The Elders with the Pastor formed the session, and constituted an ecclesiastical court, for the adjudication of all matters of government of the congregation, and discipline of its members. All baptized persons, as well as members in communion, were subjected to the watch and discipline of the session. Candidates for admission into the church, were examined and admitted by them. Their discipline was strict, and conducted with great solemnity and decorum. The session met frequently, either at Mr. Moorhead's, or the houses of the Elders, in rotation. It began with prayer, by the Minister, and closed with the same by one of the Elders.

In 1744, the number of Elders of his church, were

twelve, and the congregation was divided into twelve districts. The duty of each Elder was to visit and pray with the sick, within his bounds; to counsel, advise, and reprove, when needful; and to notify the session of the circumstances of the poor, and obtain for them some pecuniary assistance.

Once or twice in the year, Mr. Moorhead visited all the families of his congregation, in town and country; (one of the Elders, in rotation, accompanying him,) for the purpose of religious instruction. On these occasions, he addressed the heads of families with freedom and affection, and inquired into their spiritual state. catechised and exhorted the children and servants, and concluded his visit with prayer. In this last solemn act, (which he always performed on his knees, at home and in the houses of his people) he used earnestly to pray for the family, and the spiritual circumstances of each member, as they respectively needed.

In addition to this labour of family visitations, he also convened, twice in the year, the families, according to the districts, at the meeting-house, when he conversed with the heads of families, asking them questions, on some of the most important doctrines of the gospel, agreeably to the Westminster confession of faith; and catechised the children and youth.

He was unwearied in his endeavours to promote the edification and salvation of his people. His thoughts and plans of benevolence extended also to their temporal concerns. He encouraged the industrious, by such small pecuniary aids as

were within his ability to bestow; or solicited assistance for them. Virtuous strangers from North Britain and Ireland, were sure to find a friend in him. As a good Bishop, he was given to hospitality. As a sample of this benevolence, allow me to mention, that it was his custom, when he heard of ministers from the country, who were strangers in Boston, at public houses, to go or send for them, to come to his hospitable roof.

He was faithful and impartial in his duty, as a reprovcr of error and vice in all their forms. While he rebuked with sharpness, he shewed an affectionate concern for the offender, and by meekness and condescension, laboured to reclaim him. With equal cheerfulness, he visited the hut or the garret of the poor, and the parlour of the rich, to do them good. Some were offended at the severity of his reproofs, and withdrew from his society to others, where they could find more indulgence. He was universally respected by the good, and feared by those of the opposite character. He appeared less ambitious of fame, than of faithfulness as a minister of Christ.

Mr. Moorhead was a plain, evangelical and practical preacher. He paid very little attention to the ornaments of style, in his pulpit performances. His discourses appeared to be extemporaneous. He expounded the Scriptures in course in the morning, and delivered a sermon in the afternoon. He preached the law and the gospel, in their spirituality and purity. He insisted principally on the peculiar doctrines of the gospel,—the deep depravity of human nature—the

Divinity of Jesus Christ, and the efficacy of the atonement—the special agency of the Divine Spirit in regeneration ; the necessity of repentance ; of faith in Christ, and of good works.

He possessed strength of mind, sprightliness of imagination, and readiness of expression ; but appeared indifferent to the choice of the most appropriate phraseology. His manner was solemn, affectionate, and pathetic. His language and manner were the index of his mind. He spoke from the heart. His tears flowed in the earnest, alarming, or persuasive applications of his sermons. He was an "Israelite, in whom was no guile." Such was the success of his faithful labours, and the accession of foreign Protestants, that in six years, after the founding of the church, the communicants were about two hundred and fifty. Four times in the year, he celebrated the Lord's supper. They were seasons of great solemnity. On these occasions Mr. Moorhead commonly had the assistance of one or two of his brethren, particularly the Rev. Mr. M'Gregore, and afterwards the Rev. Mr. Clarke of Londonderry, and once, of the celebrated Mr. Whitefield, when every heart was moved by his solemn and enraptured performances. On these occasions, each minister served at a table in rotation.

At those seasons of fervent zeal in religion, the house could not contain the multitudes, eager to hear the words of eternal life. The doors and windows were crowded with spectators.

The society in general were respectable for good morals, industry, sobriety, attention to the

duties of family religion, and the government and education of their children.

At the age of twenty-six, Mr. Moorhead married Miss Sarah Parsons, an English lady of a bright genius and good education. With her he lived happily, many years ; and by her had several children. The only surviving one, is the widow of the late Capt. Alexander Wilson of Boston.

He continued the faithful pastor of the church about forty-four years, and died at the commencement of the revolutionary war, and entered we trust into everlasting rest.

The children of the founders of the church, feeling less attachment than their fathers, to the particular forms of Presbyterian church government, and finding themselves locally distant from those of the same denomination, with whom to associate ; changed the Presbyterian, for the Congregational form of government, at the settlement of the Rev. Dr. Belknap, the successor of Mr. Moorhead.

May the purity of evangelical doctrines and manners, be forever maintained in a church founded by the signal direction and blessing of Heaven !

LIFE OF REV. JOHN SERGEANT.

(Continued from page 355.)

BESIDES contending with the difficulties, which arose from the ignorance, the degradation, the habits of the Indians, Mr. Sergeant met with obstructions to his benevolent designs from an unexpected quarter. If indignation ever rises in the breast of

a good man, he will feel indignant when he reads, that certain *Dutch* traders from Hudson's river, who had supplied the Indians with *rum* at a very advanced price, and who took advantage of their folly, when in a state of intoxication, to make a good bargain with them, fearing that their profit would be diminished and their "craft be in danger," made every attempt to produce in their minds an aversion to the Christian religion and a suspicion of the design, for which a missionary was sent amongst them. But such conduct, how much soever it may excite abhorrence, is neither surprising nor uncommon. When men prefer the acquisition of wealth to a good conscience, we must suppose that they will overlook every consideration of humanity and benevolence; and how many do we now observe, who oppose the progress of the gospel, if not exactly in the manner adopted by the Dutch traders, yet by refusing to obey it, by their pernicious examples, and by casting contempt upon the righteous? Mr. Sergeant, however, was so happy as to convince the Indians of the design of the traders, and thus counteracted the insinuations of those, whose *gain was their godliness*.

In December, agreeably to his promise when he left New Haven, he returned to the college to remain until commencement with the class, which had been committed to his care. He took with him two Indian boys, the sons of the Captain and Lieutenant, and left in his school at Housatonic Mr. Timothy Woodbridge of Springfield, who was very serviceable in promoting

the objects of the mission. The number of scholars had now increased to twenty-five, and the opinion which Mr. Sergeant had formed of the capacity of his tawney pupils, will be seen in the following extract from a letter addressed to Adam Winthrop, Esq. Secretary of the board of Commissioners. "If I do not judge amiss, the Indian children excel the generality of ours in pregnancy of parts and good humour. I am sure that I could not have found an English school any where, that would have pleased me so much." He proceeds to say, "Capt. Kunkapot is an excellent man, and I do believe has the true spirit of Christianity in him. He knows a great deal, and by the character all his acquaintance give of him, his conduct is unexceptionable."

While at New Haven, he was not unmindful of his Housatonic friends, but sent them several letters; in one of which he tells them, "you are always in my heart, and I cease not every day to pray to God for you. We are all sinners, and deserve to be punished; but Christ took upon himself the punishment due to us. They cannot be your friends, that try to discourage you. They only endeavour to keep you in ignorance, that they may be under better advantage to cheat you. Knowledge is certainly good. It is to the mind what light is to the eye. You would think them your greatest enemies, that should endeavour to put out your eyes; especially if you were travelling a difficult road. This world is like a thick, and entangled wilderness; and why should not you, as well as other people, enjoy the benefit of

the light? Truth is more precious, than the light of the sun. Don't suffer your enemies to impose upon you."

In January, 1735, deputies from the several clans, which constituted the tribe of River Indians, met in council at Housatonic, to see whether they would approve the conduct of their Housatonic brethren in consenting to be taught the Christian religion. On the result of their deliberation every thing relative to the mission depended. The Rev. Mr. Williams and Mr. Hopkins of Springfield were therefore present. They found nearly two hundred Indians assembled, and among them *Corlair*, the chief sachem of the whole nation. Mr. Williams preached to "one of the gravest and most attentive auditories," that he ever addressed; and after repeated conferences the proceedings at Housatonic received the approbation of the council. They desired Mr. Woodbridge to continue in the school, and expressed a wish that Mr. Sargeant would return.

After business was finished, a "frolic" followed of course. "Their *dancing*, (says Mr. S.) is a most laborious exercise. They dance round a hot fire, till they are almost ready to faint, and are wet with sweat; and then run out, and stripping themselves naked, expose their bodies to the cold air, and roll in the snow till they are cold, and then return to their dancing again. They repeat this four or five times in a night, concluding with excessive drinking. When they are drunk, they often fall asleep in the open air, perhaps buried in snow."

In May, Mr. S. made a short

visit to the Indians, and in July left New Haven intending to pass the remainder of his life at Housatonic. As he found some of the Indians desirous of baptism, it was necessary that he should be ordained in order to administer that rite. Accordingly he was in August solemnly set apart to the service of the gospel. The ordination was performed at Deerfield, under circumstances calculated to add respectability to the mission. It took place by the direction of Gov. Belcher, at a time when he was in that town, with a large committee of the Council and House of Representatives, holding a treaty with several of the Indian tribes. The Rev. Mr. Appleton of Cambridge preached the sermon, in the preface to which he observes that "many of the Indians were grave spectators of the solemnity, and the Housatonic Indians sat by themselves and attended throughout the whole service with great seriousness; and were much pleased to see one, whom they had such a love for, so solemnly separated to the service of their souls."

Very soon after Mr. S. had returned to the scene of his labours, he baptized the captain and lieutenant with their families, first unfolding to them the nature of the rite and "discouraging upon all the more important points of belief and practice in the Christian religion." "The lieutenant," he says in his journal, "is a *clear-headed, smart man*, of a deep reach and pleasant humour, and is one of the best speakers we hear; is free in conversation, and talks excellently well. He has entirely left off drinking to excess, and declaims against it;

shews great compassion towards the rest of the Indians, and seems heartily to lament their miserable condition ; wishes they were come to the knowledge of the gospel ; is himself thoroughly convinced of the truth ; and his knowledge does not puff him up."

Mr. Sergeant's auditory on the Sabbath gradually increased ; he was heard very attentively by strangers, who happened to be present, and such favourable impression was made upon their minds, that some of them sent their children to the school, and a few families were induced to reside permanently with their brethren at Housatonic. In a few months after his ordination, he had baptized about forty persons, adults and children, and there was the same number of scholars in the school. He was cheered with much greater success, than he could anticipate in so short a time. He beheld the *wolf dwelling peaceably with the lamb, and the lion eating straw like the ox.* The interest, which good men at a distance took in his labours, will be seen in the following extracts from letters addressed to him.

Dr. Colman of Boston says, in a letter dated Nov. 18, 1735, "It is not easy to tell you, how much we have rejoiced here in your ordination to the good and great work, into which you have entered. May the consolations of God refresh and enlarge your soul from time to time, in all your self-denials for the sake of his name, and of the dear souls, for whom you are labouring. I gave some account to the excellent Dr. Watts, of London, of the strange disposition of the Housa-

tonic tribe to receive the gospel, and of the good Spirit on you to leave the college and go among them. He answers me, that he is always looking out to this quarter of the world for such appearances. *May Jesus, says he, the head of the church and of nations, attend your young missionary with extraordinary assistance, and success. Methinks I love him, upon your report, for his courage and zeal.* Let your heart, dear Sir, be encouraged, and your hands strengthened by the love and prayers of men of God at such a distance from you. They hear of you, and rejoice and bless, of whom you neither hear nor think."

Governor Belcher writes in a manner, which impresses one with the belief of his own undissembled piety and regard to the truth ; "Set before you the example of the great apostle of the Gentiles for your imitation, that you may approve yourself a *chosen vessel* unto Christ, to bear his name to those, that are *perishing for lack of vision.* And may you, Sir, be honoured of God by being made an instrument of taking the scales from their eyes. May you be wise to win their souls, and be able to say to them, *In Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the gospel.* For these things will I bow my knees, and lift up my heart to Him, *with whom is the residue of the Spirit.*"

Rev. Mr. Appleton, of Cambridge, expresses himself thus ; "Give my hearty respects to Mr. Woodbridge. I heartily commend you both to the grace of God, earnestly praying, that the great *Lord of the harvest,* who has sent you forth, would

continue to *strengthen your hands* and *encourage your heart* by *increasing the fruit of your labours*; and that these poor, neglected, perishing people may be your *joy* for the present, and your *crown* in the day of *Christ's appearing*."

Some parts of Mr. Sergeant's answer to the Rev. Dr. Colman may not be unacceptable to the reader. "Next to the blessing of God on my endeavours, the prayers and good wishes of men of God yield me the greatest satisfaction. In their favour I seem to enjoy the pleasure of society in the deepest solitude. I wish I were worthy of the love of so excellent a man as Dr. Watts, whom all love and admire. And if I may be thought in any measure to deserve the good opinion of my fellow men, it is not a little owing to the Doctor's ingenious writings, which have the force to charm the mind to the love of virtue and piety, and to infuse his own spirit into his readers.

"Those who have been baptized, have behaved very well, though they have several times been tempted to exceed the rules of temperance by the offers of strong drink, which used to be their beloved destruction. They seemed to be surprised with the change they find in themselves, expressing the difference between their former state and the present, by *infancy* and *manhood*, *dreaming* and *being awake*, *darkness* and *light*, and the like metaphors. I pray God, *the day star* that seems to be *arisen in their hearts*, may *shine more and more to the perfect day*."

(To be continued.)

For the Panoplist.

SKETCH OF REV. WILLIAM BATES, D. D.

Introductory Remarks.

Messrs. Editors,

If the character of that body of men, of which the first settlers of New England were a part, were more generally known at the present day, the cause of truth might be better secured against the injurious impression of epithets, which had their origin in prejudice and party spirit. During the reign of the Stewarts, the high church party, headed by archbishop Laud, Sheldon, and other tyrannical prelates, branded all Protestants, whose consciences resisted their unscriptural impositions, with the ironical epithet of *Puritans*, and *Precisians*. Sometimes indeed, from their attachment to civil liberty, they were charged with sedition and rebellion. But their common appellation was *Puritans*; an epithet, intended to denote no difference in the *doctrinal* articles of their faith (for in these both parties agreed) but that the Nonconformists or Dissenters were a set of weak, narrow, ignorant and superstitious fanatics, who through pride and obstinacy opposed the government and ceremonies of the establishment, and the subscriptions required by law. The same epithet is still retained and applied by some, as a term of opprobrious distinction; but not so much to designate Dissenters from the *ceremonies* of the church, as adherents to its *doctrines*. This application of the term may be well calculated to stigmatize the commonly receive-

ed faith of the reformed churches; but it is such a perversion, as would have excited the resentment of *Laud* himself. In denominating those *Puritans*, who refused compliance with their arbitrary requisition, *Episcopalians* had no reference to doctrinal articles of faith; nor the least suspicion, that by so doing they should in process of time subject those articles to the stigma of being the creed of weak and ignorant bigots only, and not of men of enlarged and enlightened understandings. Every dissenter from the worship and ceremonies of the church of England is in reality a *Puritan* in the technical sense of the term. No honest and well informed Dissenter, therefore, can feel himself at liberty to apply this opprobrious term in such a connexion, as to bring the doctrines of grace into disrepute. Of this effect indeed there would be no danger, if the character of the Puritans had not been grossly misrepresented. To remedy this evil, in part at least, as well as to gratify and improve your serious and pious readers, be pleased to insert in your very useful publication a few extracts from the lives of some *Puritan* ministers. With the same view, and as a natural introduction to the extracts, the following testimony is proposed for previous insertion; being the opinion of a man distinguished by erudition and strength of mind, but certainly not influenced by partiality to the favourite doctrines of the Nonconformists.

Extract from the character of the ejected nonconformist ministers, by Dr. JOHN TAYLOR, of Norwich.

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of Dissenters are not formed upon such slight foundation, as the unlearned and thoughtless may imagine. They were thoroughly considered, and judiciously reduced to the standard of Scripture, and the writings of antiquity, by a great number of men of *learning* and integrity, I mean the *Bartholomew* divines, or the ministers ejected in the year 1662; men prepared to lose all, and to suffer martyrdom itself, and who actually resigned their livings (which with most of them were, under God, all that they and their families had to subsist upon) rather than sin against God, and desert the cause of civil and religious liberty; which, together with serious religion, would, I am persuaded, have sunk to a very low ebb in the nation, had it not been for the bold and noble stand, these worthies made against imposition upon conscience, profaneness, and arbitrary power. They had the best *education*, England could afford; most of them were *excellent scholars*, *judicious divines*, pious, faithful, and laborious ministers; of great zeal for God and religion; undaunted and courageous in their Master's work; keeping close to their people in the worst times; diligent in their studies; solid, affectionate, powerful, lively, awakening preachers; aiming at the advancement of real, vital religion in the hearts and lives of men, which, it cannot be denied, flourished greatly wherever they could influence. Particularly they were men of great devotion and eminent abilities in *prayer*, uttered, as God enabled them, from the abundance of their hearts and affections; men of di-

vine eloquence in pleading at the throne of grace ; raising and melting the affections of their hearers, and being happily instrumental in transfusing into their souls the same spirit and heavenly gift. And this was the ground of all their other qualifications ; they were excellent men, because excellent, instant and fervent in prayer. Such were the *fathers*, the first formers of the *Dissenting interest*. Those who knew them not, might despise them ; but your forefathers, wiser and less prejudiced, esteemed them highly in love for their work's sake. The presence and blessing of God appeared in their assemblies, and attended their labours. — *Let my soul forever be with the souls of these men !*"

To this may be added the testimony of the great Mr. LOCKE, who was well acquainted with several of them. Speaking of the *Act of uniformity* he says, "That BARTHOLOMEW DAY was fatal to our church and religion, by throwing out a very great number of WORTHY, LEARNED, PIOUS, and ORTHODOX divines, who could not come up to this, and other things in that act."

SKETCH OF WILLIAM BATES, D.D.

DR. BATES was born in 1625. He was educated in the University of Cambridge, where he took the degree of B. A. 1647, and of D. D. 1660. His graceful mien and comely person were adapted to command respect in that public station, for which Providence designed him. His concern lay not only with *mean men* ; he was to stand before *kings*. It is well known in what relation he stood

to one,* as long as was convenient for certain purposes ; and how frequent occasion he had of appearing (never unacceptably) before another.† His grave and amiable aspect commanded both reverence and love. A constant serenity reigned in his countenance ; a visible sign of the divine calm in his breast. His natural endowments were much beyond the common rate. His apprehension was quick and clear ; his reasoning faculty acute and ready ; his judgment penetrating and solid ; his wit never light or vain, though facetious and pleasant. His memory was admirable ; nor was it impaired to the last. He delivered his sermons *memoriter*, which, as he said, he continued to do, when in years, partly to teach some, who were younger, to preach without notes. He was reputed one of the best orators of the age. His voice was charming ; his language always elegant ; his style inimitably polite, yet easy, and to himself the most natural.

His learning was a vast treasure, and his knowledge of books so extensive, that one of the brightest ornaments of the establishment said, "were he to collect a library, he would as soon consult Dr. Bates, as any man he knew." He was well versed in the politer parts of learning, which rendered his conversation highly entertaining to the more

* Charles II. to whom he was chaplain.

† King WILLIAM III. To whom, at his accession to the throne, he presented the congratulatory address of the dissenting ministers. He also presented their address of condolence on the death of the Queen.

intelligent part of mankind, and his company was much coveted by persons of quality. He was honoured with the friendship of the Lord-keeper *Bridgman*. The Lord Chancellor *Finch*, and the earl of *Nottingham* had a particular respect for him. Archbishop *Tillotson* held him in high esteem, and maintained an intimacy with him to the end of his life. If interest would have induced him to conformity, he could not have wanted a temptation. He might have had any bishopric in the kingdom, if he would have deserted his cause. His integrity, modesty, and peaceable temper are conspicuous in the close of his farewell sermon, Aug. 17, 1662, (the Sabbath preceding the general ejection of the dissenting clergy by the act of *uniformity*)—"I know you expect me to say something as to my non-conformity. I shall only say thus much ; it is neither fancy, faction, nor humour, that makes me not comply ; but merely the fear of offending God. And if, after the best means used for my illumination ; as prayer to God, discourse, and study, I am not able to be satisfied concerning the lawfulness of what is required, it be my unhappiness to be in error, surely men will have no reason to be angry with me in this world, and I hope God will pardon me in the next."

His piety was very conspicuous, and his private conversation so instructive and quickening, in reference to religion and godliness, that no man of ordinary

capacity could hear his most familiar discourses, without great advantage, or great negligence. To place religion in a morose sourness was far from his practice, judgment, and temper. But his mind was most intent on divine things ; and his discourse on other subjects was interwoven with religion, and centered in it ; especially what is most vital and essential to it. "I never knew any one (says Mr. Howe) more frequent or affectionate in the admiration of divine grace, upon all occasions, than he was, as none had a deeper sense of the *impotence* and *depravity* of human nature. Into what transports of admiration of the love of God have I seen him break forth ! - How easy a step did he make it from earth to heaven ! With what flights of thought and affection was he wont to speak of the heavenly state ! Even like a man more akin to the other world than this."

He was ejected from St. Dunstan's in the west, London. He was many years one of the Tuesday lecturers at Salter's hall, where he preached to a thronged assembly. In the latter part of life he exercised his ministry at Hackney with great success. He died in 1699, aged 74. Mr. Howe's funeral sermon for him (founded on John xi. 16. *Let us also go, and die with him*) contains a most passionate lamentation over him, in a strength of language characteristic of that great writer.

ORTON.

Religious Communications.

SURVEY OF NEW ENGLAND CHURCHES.

(Continued from p. 365.)

ANOTHER argument against *confessions of faith* will now be investigated.

Objection II. *Confessions of faith are inconsistent with the absolute perfection and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures. It is in the inspired writings only that we can be sure to find the genuine doctrines of Christianity expressed with perspicuity and a just extent. No phrases can be so well adapted to the nature of divine things, or so well calculated to preserve the purity of religion, as those which the Holy Ghost has seen fit to use. And, therefore, creeds, consisting of words of man's wisdom, are a great disrespect to the sacred writings, and an affront to the divine Spirit which inspired them. At the same time they show a presumptuous confidence in man, as if he could devise more proper expressions, than those of Scripture; or as if the purity of faith could be better maintained by human inventions, than by a steady adherence to our infallible standard. In short, confessions are an evident encroachment upon the authority of the Bible, and lead men to neglect its holy contents, and thus tend to undermine the foundation of religion.*

This objection, which is almost the only one that remains to be considered, claims for its support *the perfection of the Scriptures.* Now in order that we may come

to an enlightened conclusion on this subject, it is necessary to consider, that the perfection of the Scriptures consists in their being completely adapted to the ends, for which they were intended. Their perfection must not be made to consist in the utmost degree of any one quality, or in their being fitted to any one particular purpose; but in the adaptedness of the whole to the complex design of revelation. That complex design is to furnish mankind with a *universal rule of faith and practice.* Such a design requires *fulness*, and *perspicuity.* There is a perfect fulness in the Scriptures, if they reveal all that is necessary for us in the present state. And as to their perspicuity, it is sufficient to answer all the cavils of infidels, if they reveal necessary truths with such plainness, that persons of every capacity may attain the knowledge of them, by a diligent and pious use of appointed means. The perfection of the Scriptures does not imply, that divine truth is always expressed in the most obvious manner, or that plainer expressions could not possibly be used; but that it is expressed so plainly, that every devout inquirer may understand it, as far as God sees to be necessary. The perspicuity of Scripture, it must be remembered, is calculated for diligence, and not for sloth. Though the necessary truths of revelation may be easily understood by the attentive and impartial mind, they may be greatly misapprehended by a mind biassed with

prejudice, puffed up with pride, or clouded by any evil passion.

Now if it can be made to appear that confessions of faith, in their nature and design, are by no means incompatible with the perfection of Scripture, the objection, stated above, will lose its force.

Let it, then, be constantly kept in mind, that creeds are to be considered neither as a substitute for Scripture, nor supplementary to it, nor as a rule, conformably to which Scripture ought to be measured and understood by the people, nor in any degree as a standard of truth and falsehood in matters of religion. So that the question before us is precisely this ; *whether creeds may be drawn up in any words, but those of Scripture, not as rules of faith, but as declarations of our own sentiments, and means of discovering the sentiments of others.*

In order to show the propriety and necessity of creeds, framed and used in this manner, it is sufficient to prove, that we cannot make a satisfactory declaration of our own sentiments, or a clear discovery of the sentiments of others, so long as we confine ourselves to the precise words and expressions of holy writ. The reason of this may soon appear. But whatever the reason, the fact is plain.

Take a particular text. Two persons may subscribe it, and yet contradict one another with respect to the very article which it contains. A Socinian will readily assent to any passages of Scripture, which assert the divinity of Christ ; and at the same time we know that, according to the gloss which he puts upon them, they represent Christ as

a mere man. Two men may subscribe certain passages of Paul's writings, when from those very passages they derive different and irreconcilable doctrines. Whence it clearly follows, that, in the present state of things, a person's owning his belief of the Scriptures, and assenting to particular passages is not, in itself, the least proof of the sentiments he embraces.

This fact is easily accounted for. It ought to be most thankfully acknowledged, that the sacred oracles are adorned with a noble simplicity, and, considered in themselves, are free from artifice and ambiguity. They are an open, plain, and impartial representation of the doctrines contained in them ; so that, without any addition or explication, they may be truly, though not perfectly understood by all, who sincerely apply their minds to the discovery of divine truth. And whenever we speak of the plainness and perspicuity of Scripture phrases, we mean to consider them, as they lie in the Scriptures, and as they are expressions of God's mind to his creatures. But the words and phrases of Scripture have, by one party or another, been greatly perverted from their true sense. People ascribe different meanings to them, and whenever they use them, intend to express different notions. *As they are used and understood by mankind, they are of an ambiguous and indeterminate signification.* Hence it is plain, they are not clear expressions of a person's faith, even as to the most essential articles of Christianity. If churches, fully persuaded that certain prevailing sentiments are inconsistent with

the gospel, were about to judge of the qualifications of a minister, they could obtain no definite idea of his opinions, merely from his assent to scripture phrases. As circumstances are, it is absolutely impossible, by the use of scripture phrases only, to declare our faith to others. This is not charging any imperfection upon the word of God. For confessions of faith, strictly speaking, are not designed to give an account of what the Holy Ghost says concerning any articles of faith, but of what *we believe*. And when we would determine, whether any particular terms are proper to be used in creeds; the question is, whether they will express, with sufficient clearness, the real belief of those who assent to them.

As scripture phrases, however clear and determinate in themselves, have become of an ambiguous signification, they are not suited to the purpose of confessions. And to say that no confessions should be composed or assented to in any language, but that of Scripture, is to say, we must be entirely uncertain, whether those, with whom we join in church fellowship, and those whom we elect for ministers, believe the doctrines of our religion, or not.

It follows from this unreasonable notion, that we should never make an explicit confession of Christ and his gospel before men. For how can we give a testimony to the faith of the gospel in a declining age, or profess our firm adherence to the truth by subscribing a proposition, which they who reject the doctrines we believe, are as ready to subscribe, as we are? What sat-

isfaction can thus be given to any discerning man concerning our belief? By such a subscription or assent to a scripture phrase, we impose upon our thoughtless neighbours. Unless we explain our meaning, we do nothing but conceal our sentiments. Indeed it is the very practice we are opposing, to which they resort, who mean to disguise their religious opinions. They form the language of Scripture into a covert under which they can hide, a shelter to which they can retreat from the region of light and truth.

It is in vain to urge the perspicuity of scripture language, by which we allow it is perfectly adapted to be a universal rule of faith and practice. Whatever men's speculations on the subject may be, it is, I repeat it, a well known fact, that the use of scripture phrases does not determine what a man's sentiments are, even on the most important points in religion. So that the scheme, which the adversaries of creeds undertake to found on the perfection of Scripture, is calculated to break down all the fences, which secure the church from danger, and to let in all manner of errors and corruptions. It affords a hiding place to the most pernicious deceivers. It tends to confound all religious societies, and to destroy the very being of church communion, which is founded on *one faith, one hope, one baptism*.

It may be said, that creeds are liable to the same abuse as scripture phrases; that others may understand them in a different sense from what we do; and that dishonest men may please themselves with subtilties, by the help

of which they fancy they can subscribe our confessions, while they reject the obvious sense. It is readily acknowledged, that there is no absolute security against human error and deceit ; and that after all our vigilance we may be imposed upon. But this sense of danger should excite the greater caution, and engage us to use those methods which seem least liable to mistake. We already know that scripture phrases are used by different persons in a different sense. Some men think the plainest passages in favour of a particular truth ought to be so explained, as to mean quite the contrary. If after knowing this, we should consider a person's assenting to or using those passages, as a satisfactory declaration of his faith, we might justly be charged with the weakest credulity. On the contrary, we perceive that men of erroneous sentiments generally refuse to subscribe orthodox confessions. In this case they cannot so easily satisfy themselves with evasive distinctions. But if the expressions used in any creed should, in process of time, be so applied as to become ambiguous, churches might consistently make alterations, and use other expressions of a more determinate signification. For, while the Holy Scriptures are designed for a universal and perpetual rule of faith and manners ; confessions of faith are of a limited nature, and must be framed with reference to the particular state of nations, to the heresies which prevail, to the various arts and subtrefuges of deceivers, to the sense in which they use words, and the particular cast which

they give to their schemes. By attending to such things, the enlightened friends of truth may, at every period, construct creeds, which will answer the double purpose of declaring their own sentiments, and of discovering the sentiments of others.

They, who place so much dependence on a mere assent to scripture phrases, are evidently chargeable with superstition. *Words* in themselves, are nothing. They are arbitrary signs of our thoughts, and derive all their meaning from common usage. The words of Scripture are no more valuable, or worthy of regard, than any other words, if we abstract them from the sense or doctrine which they are designed to express. The whole value of words consists in the meaning, which the speaker or writer intends to convey by them. So far, therefore, as any words or phrases are without a determinate sense, they are worthless. He that uses them, without explanation, might as well say nothing. If scripture phrases are understood by the world in different senses, and he, who uses them, refuses to inform others in *what sense* he uses them, he mocks those who wish to know his sentiments. For example. A man pretends to satisfy us concerning his faith by assenting to a passage where CHRIST is called GOD ; though he chooses not to tell us, whether by the word GOD he means the supreme, self-existent Being, or a metaphorical deity, as the Socinians consider it. In such a case, he does not give us the least knowledge of his belief, and might as well use a Chinese word, as the name of God. To

consider, therefore, such a use of scripture phrases, as a sufficient declaration of a man's faith, is so far from consulting the glory of inspiration, that it is turning its words into so many charms and amulets; and it might as reasonably be affirmed, that a few scripture words, written on paper, will cure a man of diseases, as to affirm that they will make known a person's sentiments, when the meaning he affixes to them is disguised.

The ancient Pharisees destroyed the spirit of the law, while they pretended the strictest regard to its letter. They acknowledged every part of the moral and ceremonial law, while Christ charged them with making it void. They were willing to subscribe any passages in the prophets, which related to the Messiah. But that did not denominate them believers, so long as they understood those passages in a wrong sense, and refused to apply them to Jesus of Nazareth. Those men, therefore, who would receive a person's assent to the letter or phrases of Scripture, without any explanation, as a sufficient test of his orthodoxy, build their scheme upon the maxims of the scribes, and, to say nothing worse, introduce into the Christian church the old Jewish pharisaism.

The only perceivable way to avoid these absurdities is to assert, that they who adhere to scripture phrases are far from designing to use them in an uncertain sense; that, while they choose to express the doctrines of the gospel in the words of the Holy Ghost, they are willing, if desired, to explain what they believe to be the meaning of those

words. But if they will do this, they yield the point in debate. To subscribe a passage of Scripture taken in such a particular sense, is the same as subscribing the expressions by which we explain its sense, or the same as making those expressions a part of our creed.

In reality, we are required to receive the *truths*, rather than the mere *words* of Scripture. It is the *mind* of Christ, or the *doctrines* he taught, and not mere combinations of letters, that deserve the name of the Christian revelation. Consequently, where those doctrines are taught and received in their purity, in whatever terms they are expressed, there the Bible is honoured, as the standard of faith. Where those doctrines are denied, how tenaciously soever scripture phrases are held, there the Bible is rejected, and another rule of faith set up in its stead.

But there are other consequences worthy of notice, resulting from the scheme of those who maintain, that none but scripture phrases are to be used in declarations of faith.

According to their scheme, there could be no expounding of Scripture. The advantage of the best commentaries and the best preaching would be lost, and the whole course of public and private instruction would consist merely in reading the Bible. How effectually this would contravene the great design of the gospel ministry, and how fatal it would be to the cause of religion is, doubtless, as evident to our opponents, as to ourselves.

If a man publishes a book containing what he believes to be

the doctrines of the gospel, he does as much as to *subscribe* those doctrines. Whatever a gospel minister speaks concerning religion, he may consistently subscribe. He should surely be ready to give the most solemn assent himself to every thing, which he publicly delivers, as the will of God, to the people. Can any reason be given, why a preacher should refuse to subscribe his own sermon, or any doctrine contained in it? Ought he not to maintain as great sincerity and caution, as inviolable a regard to the truth, and as close an adherence to revelation in the pulpit, as any where else? There he is under sacred obligations to *hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught*, and to instruct the people in sound doctrine. He ought to speak because he believes. When he preaches any thing from the pulpit, by the words which he uses, he *confesses his faith*, and virtually subscribes a creed drawn up in those very terms. So that the reason, which will confine creeds to the precise phrases of Scripture, will confine sermons to them also. And if preaching must be restricted to scripture phrases, why not every kind of religious communication? According to this notion, we must never speak or write any thing on divine subjects, except in the very words of inspiration, lest we should be called upon to subscribe the sentiments, which we express.

The scheme of our opponents has a very unfavourable aspect on all translations of the Bible, and seems to make it impracticable for such as are unacquainted with the Hebrew and Greek languages, ever to declare their

faith in the doctrines of revelation. For, in rigid propriety, it is the Bible in the original tongues only, which consists of the words made use of by the Holy Ghost. Those, properly, are the words of revelation. No English words or phrases can pretend to the authority of scripture expressions, unless they are a just interpretation of the Hebrew and Greek, and correspond in sense with the original. If a sly deceiver, resolved at any rate to support his favourite scheme, should translate a passage of the Greek Testament into such English phrases, as did not express the sense of the original, but contained the very error, which the Spirit of God meant to condemn; it would be absurd to call those English phrases *scripture words*, or to consider a man, who assented to them, as assenting to the words of the Holy Ghost.

Whenever we subscribe a text as it stands in our common version, designing thereby to declare our faith in scripture words, we virtually declare that we think the true meaning of the original expressed in our translation, which, as far as this subject is concerned, is tantamount to subscribing those confessions of faith, which, in our opinion, contain the true doctrines of inspiration. Could we free the words of our language from all ambiguity, and always use them in a determinate sense; the chief controversy would be, *in what way the original text should be translated*. In that case, confessions of faith might be so framed, that the principal thing imported by our subscribing them would be, that we

believe such and such texts ought to be so rendered, and that the interpretation given by the opposite side is erroneous. Now would not confessions of this kind be liable to all the objections, which are made against those in common use? If then we regulate ourselves wholly according to the opinion of those, who oppose confessions, we never can declare our faith, except in the Hebrew and Greek languages, in which the very phrases used by the inspired writers are found.

Once more. If none but scripture expressions are to be used, it will be impossible for us to declare our faith in the clearest and most legitimate *scripture consequences*, or in those truths, which, though not explicitly asserted in the Scriptures, are plainly inferrible from them. In this way some truths of our religion, which are by all acknowledged to be of great importance, must be entirely set aside, or if believed, must by no means be professed.

These are some of the consequences of the scheme espoused by the adversaries of creeds. Into such absurdities must they inevitably fall, so long as they regard words more than things; so long as they venerate and honour the phrases of Scripture more than the truths contained in them, and look upon empty sounds, instead of the purity of faith, as a distinguishing mark of Christianity.

Only one more objection against the use of confessions will be noticed.

Objection III. *Whatever may be urged in favour of creeds, they have in fact been the occasion of*

numberless disorders in the Christian world. They have fomented division and strife, by which the church has been rent, while Christian love and piety have been lost in the contest. They have been framed to entangle conscience, and to stifle the truth. They have often been made engines of ambition, avarice, and cruelty. They have promoted a blind, malignant zeal, and led to the fiercest and most bloody persecutions. And in general they are very prejudicial to Christian love and candour.

In reply, it may be observed, that the principal evils mentioned in this objection took place, when creeds were armed with the sword, with blood and torture. But what have these evils to do with that authority of creeds, which is perfectly consistent with the most extended rights of rational creatures, and is founded on the unalienable and essential privileges of all societies? Is the abuse of a thing to be made an argument against it? The wisest institutions, the best privileges, and the most valuable possessions are liable to abuse; and when abused, become occasions of great mischief. This is the case with the noble faculty of reason; with the privileges of human society, and with the sublimest truths of revelation. Even the grace of the Lord Jesus is often turned into licentiousness. Shall we then urge the abuse of creeds, as an argument against them? The uncharitable heats and contentions, and other mischiefs, which are mentioned in the objection, are not to be ascribed to the nature and tendency of creeds, but to the unsanctified passions of mankind. From this source,

not from confessions of faith, are derived all the storms which have broken the peace of the church, all the persecutions, which have wasted the saints, and all the fires, which have devoured the world. If the hearts of men were sanctified; if, under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, they would practise the noble virtues of the Christian religion; we should soon see an end of division and strife, and rejoice in the prosperity and peace of Zion. But if the passions of men continue unsanctified, it is in vain to expect that any other methods will secure the welfare either of civil or religious society. Will setting aside confessions, and removing the restraints, which religion lays upon mankind, terminate the reign of sin, and procure quiet and happiness? Have we not seen those, who trample on creeds, and even those, who spurn all the restraints of religion, as fond of their own notions, as imperious, and as uncharitable, as the most earnest promoters of orthodoxy? Human depravity is ever active; and if it should cease to be occupied with religious contentions, it would show itself in some other way.

The objection before us has no weight, unless it can be proved that the principles, which we have endeavoured to vindicate with respect to confessions, are inconsistent with the amiable virtues of Christianity. But what pretence is there for such an allegation? Are not moderation and meekness compatible with unshaken firmness? Is not the warmest zeal for the faith of the gospel consistent with mod-

esty, humility, and love? May we not feel and manifest all the excellencies of benevolence, forbearance and candour, while we refuse to choose a man for our minister, or to admit him to church communion, until he gives us some evidence, that he is a disciple of Jesus, and has embraced the faith once delivered to the saints? Thus, however great the evils, which have at any time been occasioned by creeds, there is evidently nothing in their nature and proper tendency, which does not harmonize with the most enlarged affection of Christians, as well as with the most precious interests of the church.

But there are many good effects of confessions, which, tho' overlooked by our opponents, afford a strong argument in their favour. These effects have been considered in a former number of this SURVEY. I shall only add the words of a late writer in the Religious Monitor. "Not to speak of their effects in primitive times; it was by confessions, that the principles of the reformation were spread; that the scheme was brought to a consistency; and that, under the divine blessing, the fervid heroism was produced, which inspired our fathers to brave opposition, and defy danger." How important it is to secure the blessings which were gained by the reformation! The hero, who has delivered his country, or the patriot, who has introduced salutary laws or institutions, esteems the effects of his prowess or wisdom in proportion to their stability and permanence. It is so in religion. How evidently proper, therefore, it is, that Christian

churches should adopt certain internal regulations for the purpose of maintaining, in purity, the faith which they profess, and of transmitting it to future ages.

We have now exhibited what we judged of chief consequence on this subject. We have endeavoured to point out the utility and importance of *confessions of faith*; to explain the principles on which they rest; to remove the doubts of the honest, but misinformed; and to answer the objections and expose the misrepresentations of adversaries.

It is hoped, that a due consideration of what has been written will rouse the attention and zeal of those, who love the glory of Zion, and lead them to unite in every measure, which the interest of Christianity renders needful. Churches of New England, be entreated not to overlook the alarming signs of the times. Neglect not the only means of your safety. Let not those, who exalt the God of your fathers, and seek your good, ever have reason to mourn *the departure of your glory*. In this most eventful period, when the spirit of innovation and revolution is spreading such desolations and miseries over the earth, and forebodes such dreadful evils to the Christian cause, let your fears be seasonably awakened, and let a prudent foresight provide means of security. Hold fast what you have received, and let no man take your crown. If confessions of faith, wisely used, have such a beneficial influence, consider how great the evil of holding them in contempt. Contend earnestly for the gospel faith; not with

the weapons of unhallowed passion and science falsely so called, but with the more successful weapons, which Christian truth and love supply. Perhaps there is no measure more important at the present day, than the avowed and steady adherence of all orthodox ministers and churches to that scheme of religion, which was so often acknowledged by our godly fathers, and has, in substance, been generally embraced by Protestant churches. The scheme intended is that contained in the Assembly's catechism, or in the Westminster confession of faith. A general union on that basis would inconceivably strengthen the cause of Christ among us, while it would throw confusion and terror into the camp of the enemy. And notwithstanding every difficulty, such a union will take place, if it be as earnestly desired and sought by faithful ministers and churches, as it is deprecated by others. PASTOR.

THE DECALOGUE.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not steal."

God has been pleased to furnish this world with whatever is necessary for the accommodation of mankind. The right to the conveniences of life originates in the gift of God. The grant to Adam and to his posterity at the creation was confined to their existing necessities. Previously to the days of Noah, there was no permission to eat animal food. The right which mankind had either to vegeta-

bles or animals was founded on the grant of the Creator.

The earth was presented to mankind in general for their use. But as intelligent beings, they were allowed to make the most of this valuable gift. They, who were most successful in improving it, had reason to demand a principal advantage from their ingenuity and labour. Hence the origin of private property. The expectation of this advantage encourages cultivation of the ground, which none would undertake, were they not to receive immediate benefit. A nation of Indians, consisting of two or three hundred, will take up a tract of land, which, with proper management, would maintain as many thousands. Private property also preserves the produce of the earth. Were all in common, fruit would not be likely to arrive at perfection, grain would not ripen, nor flocks and herds come to their full growth. Beside, what contests would arise, what conveniences would be lost. Private property allows men to follow different occupations, which afford the civilized so many advantages over the savage life. The poorest in countries, where each has what he calls his own, are better accommodated, than leading persons in those countries, where most things are in common. Since such advantages arise from private appropriation, no doubt it is pleasing to the great Proprietor, who, in the grant he made to mankind, had their advantage in view.

In whatever I call my own, I am fully secured by the eighth commandment. It restrains the fraudulent. It curbs the plunderer. It takes cognizance of every

species of imposition. Let not the workman be superficial in his work, nor the trader overvalue his commodity. Let not the buyer say, it is nought, nor the seller be deceitful in his weights. "Let no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter; because the Lord is the avenger of all such. Let him who stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

Improper deductions have been drawn from the history of the primitive Christians. The gospel does not wrest private property from the hand of the possessor. The apostle Peter disclaims the thought. "While thy possession remained," said he to Ananias, "was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" The disposal of their possessions was left entirely to the discretion of individuals. The offering must be free, that it might be acceptable. The gospel teaches us the blessedness of giving to others. In proportion as we imbibe its spirit, we shall be liberal. But the gospel intermeddles not with civil governments. It leaves them as they are. Taking possession of the heart, it fixes there benevolent and energetic principles. How men would act, if they were all real Christians, is evident from the instances recorded in Scripture. Far from infringing the property of others, they would esteem it their chief joy to be able, in any degree, to be aiding to their fellow creatures, by their sympathy, their personal services, and their possessions.

The eighth command forbids every act of fraud or imposition, as well as taking privately or by force what belongs to another. The punishment annexed by the Jewish law to this crime was restitution with a fine. If the offender could not advance the fine adjudged by law, he might be sold and his family, until their labour should amount to what the law demanded. The unjust are ranked in Scripture with the most abandoned characters. They shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

The weight of this command has not been generally felt. It has been openly violated by nations, as well as individuals. Nimrod, the founder of the Assyrian empire, led the way. Successful warriors have trode in his footsteps. History dignifies their names as great, and blazons their deeds with admiration. But their true character is that of public plunderers, whose deeds are infamous, and whose names are accursed. PHILOLOGOS.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT.

It seems to have been the opinion of all ages, that the Being, who is styled, in Scripture, the *God of the spirits of all flesh*, has easy access to the human mind, and great influence over its determinations. If a man be deliberating, whether to engage in any particular enterprise or not; it is generally thought, that, without diminishing the free agency of that person, God may have great influence over his conclusion, that he may lead him to such a view of the subject,

that his mind will incline this way, rather than that. Almost all prayer is offered on this supposition, that our minds are capable of divine influence. We pray that God would direct us to safe and prudent measures in our common undertakings; that he would keep us from error, and lead us into the truth as to religion; that he would lead us to a right use of his providences; that he would establish us in the truth, and sanctify our hearts. Now these requests, which are the most common among men, who pray at all, do certainly imply a belief, that God can operate on our minds; for unless this be supposed, how can he direct us to the choice of suitable measures? How can he preserve us from fatal wanderings, establish us in the truth, or sanctify our hearts?

Were we to discard all belief in the reality of divine influence on the mind, the reason and ground of prayer would be weakened, and the subjects of it greatly diminished.

It is certainly a very reasonable opinion, that Deity, who is himself a Spirit, has influence on the spirits which he has made. One man has great influence over another. A man of clear discernment, great information, and much acquaintance with the ways of the world, will suddenly produce great changes in the opinions, views, and pursuits of his neighbour. How differently will a subject appear to the latter, after having conversed with the other. And how totally changed will be his determinations and actions with regard to it. Now, if such effects arise from the influence of man with man; how

much greater effects will result from the influence which God has upon man. If we can alarm one another by exhibiting dangers; cannot God alarm the sinner by convincing him of his danger? If we are sometimes able, by various means and long importunity, to alter the determinations and change the course of our neighbours, as to earthly objects; cannot God, by some of those innumerable means, which are always at his command, alter our determinations, and change our course as to heavenly things? If we can comfort and confirm one another; cannot God give consolation and establishment to the Christian's mind?

But even if the doctrine of divine influences were less intelligible than it is, we could not for that reason reject it, as it is clearly and strongly asserted, both in the Old and New Testament. We say in the Old Testament, because, although the law, of itself, does not contain so much grace, as is implied in God's communicating aid and help to sinners, in their endeavours after holy obedience; yet God has never, even in this respect, left himself without a witness; but conferred on the Jews, out of mere favour, that influence of the Holy Spirit, of which the law made no mention. Petitions for divine influence, acknowledgment of dependence on it, and promises of the outpouring of the Spirit, are very profusely scattered among the Psalms and Prophecies. *Teach me to do thy will, saith the Psalmist, for thou art my God. Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. Surely it is meet to be said*

unto God, that which I see not, teach thou me. The Psalmist uses the language of a child under a humble sense of his need of parental instruction. *Shew me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee will I wait all the day. Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way.* Solomon, when he came to the throne of Israel, impressed with the importance of the station to which he was called, sought direction and strength from above. *Give, therefore, to thy servant an understanding heart, to judge this people, that I may discern between good and bad.*

The way of man is not in himself, and it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps. The prophet Isaiah speaks of gospel days, as a season, *when the Spirit of God shall be, in unusual measures, poured out from on high.* In allusion to gospel times, God speaks thus by the mouth of Joel; *It shall come to pass, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions, and also on the servants and handmaids in those days I will pour out my Spirit.* This prophecy was fulfilled, according to St. Peter, at the feast of Pentecost, when so many were converted, and the converts received miraculous powers. Acts ii. Now, although it is evident, both from the prophecy, and the fulfilment, that miraculous powers, such as speaking in different languages, were to be one consequence of the outpouring of God's

Spirit; yet no person can reasonably doubt, that secret divine communications to the hearts of these worshippers, who then embraced the gospel, were likewise foretold; nor can any one doubt, that in this sense, likewise, the prophecy was fulfilled.

The New Testament, as might have been expected from the nature of the Christian dispensation, is more clear and copious on this subject. Christ expressly asserts, that no person can enter the kingdom of heaven, unless he experience a divine birth by the agency of God's Spirit. *Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* And the general progress of a Christian, as well as particular parts of a Christian carriage, is attributed to divine grace. Persevering believers are said to *be kept by the power of God through faith to salvation*. Christians are said to *be led by the Spirit*. It is by the Spirit that they *mortify the deeds of the body*.

In opposition to this, it has by some been objected, that by the Spirit is meant nothing more, than the word, which was given by the inspiration of the Spirit. Persons are said to be born of the Spirit, they tell us, when the word of God has such influence upon them, as to lead them to a holy life, although no divine communications are made to the mind. To this it is replied, that Paul does indeed say to the Corinthians, *I have begotten you through the gospel*; and the church is said to *be cleansed and sanctified by the word*: but neither of these expressions excludes the agency of the Spirit. It is

not doubted, that divine truths are necessary to be known, before we shall seek after salvation, and that the word is a most powerful instrument of conversion and holiness; but yet it is not efficacious of itself. And it is exceedingly evident, from the general tenor of the New Testament, as well as from particular passages, that spiritual communications are necessary to accompany the word, in order to its producing the fruits of righteousness. The children of God are said to *be chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*. In this place the sanctification of the Spirit is mentioned in distinction from the word; and therefore it is impossible, that both should mean the same thing.

In the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, the matter is placed beyond all reasonable doubt. If any words be capable of proving a doctrine, that of divine operation upon the human mind is there proved. Being led by the Spirit, and having the Spirit dwelling in us, is there stated to be indispensable to our religious security. *Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be, that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he, that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit, that dwelleth in you. If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if through the Spirit ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* Unless the necessity

of divine influences be here asserted, these strong declarations must have little or no import. For it is here said, that they, who are Christ's, have the Spirit of Christ; and that they, who are the sons of God, are led by this Spirit; i. e. directed and influenced in a holy life; and that those, who live in Christian obedience, do it by aid from above. It is through the Spirit, that they mortify the deeds of the body.

Goodness, righteousness, and truth, are said to be *fruits of the Spirit*, (Eph. v. 9.) and so are *love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, and temperance*, (Gal. v. 22, 23.)

We know not the way of the Spirit; nor ought we to attempt minuteness in describing the manner, in which its effects are produced. God uses various instruments, and frequently accomplishes the same purpose by different means. At one time he leads the mind to serious contemplation of some weighty and alarming subject, and presents that subject to the view, in a clear and striking light. He fixes the attention of sinners on those considerations, which most evidently demonstrate their danger, and the certain ruin, to which they are approaching. He directs the humble soul, the broken and the contrite heart, to those declarations of mercy, contained in the covenant of grace; and either communicates, or withholds consolation, as his wisdom and goodness dictate.

As to directing the Christian's life, God may, by an imperceptible impulse, preserve him from violent and overbearing temptations; or, when temptations are presented, may invigorate and

establish his good resolutions by bringing to his mind some striking passages of Scripture, or some alarming ideas of God's presence, or of the world to come. He may excite him to a religious activity by representing to him the danger of sloth in the business of salvation; or may urge him to sobriety by representing to him the great solemnity of the work, in which he is engaged.

Though the indwelling of the Spirit, or to be led by the Spirit, is peculiar to the children of God; yet there is reason to believe that all men under the gospel receive something of divine communications. The ancient Jews did *always resist the Holy Ghost*; but they could not have resisted the Holy Ghost, unless he had been sent to them. Of sinners it may, in general, be said, as of the ancient Jews, that they will not submit to the suggestions and influence of divine grace; they oppose and grieve the Spirit of God. Whereas the humble and contrite soul yields to the grace of Christ, becomes obedient to divine emotions, is led by the Spirit, and through the Spirit mortifies the deeds of the body.

As God has a perfect knowledge of all means, circumstances, events and combinations of events; it seems reasonable to suppose, what is in fact the case, that he makes use of various means in producing the fruits of holiness in the human heart. Sometimes loss of worldly substance, severe disappointments, imminent danger, alarming sickness, the examples, or the private admonitions of good men, consideration of their triumphant

death, or of the despairing death of the ungodly, and the reading of pious books, are used by God, as means of conviction, serious inquiry, and holiness. But the public ministration of the word, as it is the great instrument of God's own appointment, must be viewed as that, by which he usually, though not invariably, operates. That knowledge indeed of the blessed gospel of Christ, which we obtain by reading, by private and public instruction, is, in a certain degree, instrumental in every conversion, and in promoting the piety of every good man; for it is under the impression of evangelical truths, that our minds are excited, alarmed, renewed, and led on to holy obedience.

The strength of religious impressions, and the outward evidence of the change, produced by them, are not less various, than the means, by which these impressions are made. Some persons are exceedingly distressed, and violently agitated under the fearful apprehensions of divine wrath; and there have been some very extraordinary and sudden changes in the tempers, pursuits, and lives of men. There have been instances of men, whose lives had been wholly given up to dissipation and sinful pleasure, suddenly arrested in their dangerous career, and exhibiting, ever after, the fruits of holiness in a well ordered life. For, although there are many marvellous accounts of this nature, which, upon close examination, come to nothing; yet there are others, supported on such clear and weighty evidence, that it is difficult to see, how any candid and reasonable man can

possibly deny them. Yet far the more common and ordinary way of the Spirit's working is less perceptible. *The wind bloweth where it listeth; and ye hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.* Our blessed Saviour has said, *so is the kingdom of heaven, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.* To the opinion of Dr. Watts on the subject of regeneration and divine influences we do most cordially accede. "In the primitive days of Christianity," saith he, "and in the age of miracles, the Holy Ghost attended the preachers of the gospel, with his extraordinary gifts of healing, of tongues, of prophecy, as well as with the graces of conviction, sanctification, and comfort; and the suddenness, and the glory of the change that was wrought on sinners, carried with it an illustrious and uncontested proof of the presence and power of God, and his Spirit. Nor has some faint resemblance of such glorious grace been altogether wanting in later ages. There have been some most remarkable instances of great sinners, converted at once by the gospel of Christ, and the demonstration of the Spirit.

"But in his more usual and ordinary communications of grace, he works so gently upon our nature, and in so sweet and connatural a manner, as not to distinguish his agency, in a sensible manner, from the motions of our own souls; for he never disturbs our rational powers, nor

puts any violence on our natural faculties; yet, when we are changed, when we are renewed, when sin is mortified; the Scripture tells us, the Spirit of God has done it. When our souls are prepared for heaven, and our corrupt nature sanctified, and suited to the things, that are prepared in heaven for us, we are assured by the word of God, that the Holy Spirit has been the great operator, and has wrought this change in us."

LEIGHTON,

(To be concluded next month.)

QUERY.

To the Editors of the Panoplist.

GENTLEMEN,

IN the 16th No. of the Panoplist, p. 178, among the rules for preaching, it is said, "Discover no more of your plan than needs must." You will greatly oblige one of your constant readers, by defining the particular object of that direction. If by "plan" be meant, *system of doctrines*, it is conceived to be important that they be candidly disclosed. But if by that term be meant, the particular points proposed to be elucidated in a discourse, it is conceived the preacher *must needs* state them explicitly, if he would hope to gain the attention of his hearers.

An explanation is the more earnestly solicited by your inquirer, as he lately heard a preacher observe, at the commencement of his discourse, that he should discover no more of his plan than was necessary. Your inquirer has ever been unable to ascertain what was his plan. Presuming that the idea of concealing the plan of dis-

course might have been derived from the remark in the Panoplist, it is the more necessary that the subject should be placed in a lucid point of view, lest others should follow the example, and an ambiguous mode of preaching be introduced.

CANDIDUS.

The following are the Extracts from Original Letters, sent us by BETA, written by an aged Clergyman to a young Student in Divinity. They contain instruction too valuable to be lost, and we doubt not will be particularly acceptable and useful to that class of our readers, who are training up for the gospel ministry.

EDITORS.

EXTRACT NO. 1.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR solicitude for my health, is among other arguments to awaken me to live to greater purpose. Go on then, and add your prayers for this too. A gracious Providence has restored me in a measure, so that I return to my poor labours; and have attended in the week past the ordination of Mr. — at —. It was consoling to find that *all* ordinations are not so embarrassed, as that was at —. But if the disagreeables attending that, or if any thing else, shall awaken us to examine over again our preparations for this sacred work, it may be no disadvantage in the end, though for the time it may fill us with anxiety.

O that I could contribute any thing to your assistance, on the subject you mention. The question of "internal call" (which, I suppose, ought to intend being authorised to *offer* to preach the gospel) seems to be reduced by our Lord to a narrow compass, where natural and literary endowments, and a desire to this

work, are not wanting. "Lovest thou me?" then "feed my sheep," and "my lambs."

Love, we are sensible, is more than a conviction of what we owe to such a Master; and more than any common solicitude about it. There is an attachment of the soul to Him and his interests, which will carry us spontaneously to his work, and render it pleasant, with all the self-denials which it requires.

If we *seem* to have that attachment, it is not improper to examine, whether it be a new sentiment, or affection, plainly distinguishable from all that we realized in those times when we know that we were not Christians indeed: and whether it be clearly attended with a proportionable mourning over those times, proportionable abhorrence of moral evil, and love to holiness in all its forms: for such seems to be the nature of true affection to Him, in whom all moral excellence is concentrated.

It is of capital importance to examine with great care, whether the existing affection grounds itself on the identical character of the divine Saviour, which the gospel delineates; and embraces, without reserve, every part of it.

It is of consequence likewise to examine the *power* of this affection; and whether it does in fact conform the reigning temper, intentions, habits, conversation, to the spirit and views of our great Master. There will be no perfection here; but genuine love to Christ will form a reigning character, and give, on the whole, a new and distinguishing complexion to one's spirit and life.

Variations will here and there be found—yes often—but they will be as clearly mourned and condemned on reflection; and with earnest supplications, and new resolutions, for getting the better of the indwelling evil.

God be gracious to you, my friend; resolve all your doubts, and prepare you to be eminently useful. I am, &c.

(To be continued.)

At the Synod of Dort, holden in 1618, the members from Zealand came to the following result on this question;

IN WHAT MANNER SHOULD CANDIDATES BE PREPARED FOR THE SACRED MINISTRY?

(Translated for the Panoplist.)

IN order that churches may never be destitute of suitable pastors, the illustrious states are to be requested, that in every province, where such custom does not already prevail, there be a certain number of young men, to be educated for that sacred employment, at public expense. Those also, who are more wealthy, are to be advised to maintain at schools those of their children, whom they shall find suitable for such employ, and take care that they be there instructed; that there be public seminaries, from which persons may be taken to discharge the duty of pastors as often, as shall be necessary.

For this purpose there should be selected from common schools such young men, as are descended from reputable parents, that no disgrace accrue to the ministry on account of their dishonourable descent; that they be such, as have strength of body as well

as of mind, adequate to the performance of so great and arduous a duty; that they be those, who, in common schools, have given such evidence of genius and learning, as affords just reason to hope that, when they shall have arrived at maturity, they will be useful ministers in the church: in fine, that they be those, in whom may be seen strong indications of piety, probity, and modesty.

Having been thus selected, or brought up in this pursuit by their parents; as soon as they shall have finished their education in common schools, they are to be sent to academies, in which it would be useful, nay, even necessary, that there should be distinct colleges, appropriate to the youth of the various provinces, where they may studiously employ their time under the care of governors and overseers, by whose advice their studies may be directed, and who may prescribe to them a particular method in their studies, that they wander not in uncertainty, and, from a desire of learning something of every thing, learn nothing thoroughly; and finally, who may take the care of their lives and morals. For too much indulgence in academies has, to many, proved the cause of their destruction.

It is required of those, who are hereafter to preside over churches, that they both join themselves to some church, and make profession of the religion, which they are hereafter to teach to others; that they studiously improve opportunities of hearing sermons, be partakers with the church of the Lord's supper, be subject to church discipline; and

peculiarly under the inspection of pastors.

To obtain a thorough knowledge of philosophy and the languages, but particularly of theology, requires, not one or two years, but the entire space of five or six. But as those, who dare to seek promotion to the office of pastors, before they have spent scarcely two years in an academy, display great rashness; so those, who spend almost their whole time in academies, and are too late in commencing the sacred service, are not to be commended.

Wherefore, to obviate each of these evils, it would be advisable to prescribe a certain time, within which they should be obliged to finish a course of study, and at the close of which the church might enjoy their labours. That churches, patrons, and parents may be acquainted with their proficiency, it is proper, that they render to them an account of their studies each year.

Having finished this course of study in some academy, it would be useful for them to visit foreign academies and churches, and to remain in the more celebrated places, until they should have examined and thoroughly learned, whatever might there be worthy of their attention, that thus they might return to their friends, furnished with ensamples foreign as well as domestic.

On their return home, they are to exhibit to the church and people, among whom they are about to reside, recommendations from pastors of churches, and governors, or professors of academies, or from the leading men of the faculty, waiting a regular call to the pastoral office,

And as no one, after these tes-

timonies shall have been exhibited, ought to be admitted without a previous examination, preparatory to the exercise of public speaking; so likewise it is necessary, that other exercise be added, whereby they may be rendered more fit for the faithful discharge of this sacred office.

Nor would it be unprofitable, that candidates for the ministry should sometimes read the sacred Scriptures publicly in churches. In this manner they would become known to the church, and walk more immediately under their inspection. Let the whole church have evidence of their morals, piety and probity. Finally, let them conduct themselves with such prudence, as to do nothing, which may be inconsistent with the calling, for which they are preparing; and thus let those, who are hereafter to preside over all, be known and approved by all. By thus reading in public they likewise become accustomed to the presence of an assembly, and obtain a certain freedom of speech. Their voice likewise and elocution will be thereby so formed, that they will come better prepared for *speaking publicly*, which we think ought also to be allowed them after a more accurate examination, provided the consent of the society be previously obtained.

In the next place it will be proper, that they be frequently with pastors; that they confer with them on various cases of conscience; that they accompany them, when they visit the sick, and console the afflicted; that they learn from them, how such are to be treated; how the afflicted are to be comforted;

and in fine, what kind of prayers would be suitable for the various occasions, which occur in the discharge of pastoral visits. For, although they ought to come from schools, accustomed to speak before churches; yet to reduce their knowledge to practice, is what is necessary for them to learn from pastors.

As those, who are called to the ministry, are sometime to be placed over the government of the church, and the government of churches is not accurately learned in schools; it would be profitable, if those, in the more celebrated cities, were permitted, under certain limited conditions however, to be present at presbyteries, and also at the meetings of deacons, some months previous to their call to the pastoral office, that they might thereby learn, in what manner church government ought to be established; what method ought to be used in asking questions and collecting votes; in what manner church discipline should be maintained, and what, in various cases, would be proper to be done. Also what provision ought to be made for the poor, and every thing of a similar nature, which is better learned from experience than precept. In all these things they will find great advantage, whenever they shall be called to the pastoral office.

Lastly, although in examinations, previous to their advancement, regard has hitherto been had only to their doctrine, that is, whether they were orthodox, which we confess to be of the first importance; yet it ought to be considered, whether it would not be expedient, that a practical examination should like-

wise be established, agreeably to which they should be examined, whether they were strict in maintaining that conversation, which becometh godliness, and whether they were proper persons for teaching Christian morality, and forming the manners of men to every kind of virtue; for the man of God ought to be thoroughly in-

structed in every good work; not that only, which pertains to doctrine and reproof, but also to correction and instruction in righteousness. To this end it were to be wished, that the minds of youth in colleges and academies, should be made acquainted with practical theology, and instructed in various cases of conscience.

Selections.

THE EFFECTS OF TEMPORIZING IN MATTERS OF RELIGION, EXEMPLIFIED IN THE CON- DUCT OF ERASMUS.

(Continued from p. 372.)

WE have in this year, 1521, a remarkable letter of Erasmus, addressed to his friend Pace, dean of St. Paul's. "I see, now," says Erasmus, "that the Germans (the German Lutherans) are resolved, at all adventures, to engage me in the affair of Luther, whether I will or not. In this they have acted foolishly, and have taken the surest method to alienate me from them and their party. Wherein could I have assisted Luther, if I had declared myself for him and shared the danger along with him? Only thus far, that instead of one man two would have perished. I cannot conceive what he means by writing with such a spirit: one thing I know too well, that he hath brought a great odium upon the lovers of literature. It is true that he hath given us many a wholesome doctrine, and many a good counsel; and I wish he had not defeated the effect of them by his intolerable

faults. *But if he had written every thing in the most unexceptionable manner, I had no inclination to die for the sake of truth. Every man hath not the courage requisite to make a martyr; and I am afraid, that if I were put to the trial, I should imitate St. Peter.*"

It was proper to give these extraordinary words at length, because, though he hath elsewhere dropped some expressions amounting nearly to the same thing, yet perhaps he hath nowhere so frankly opened his mind, and so ingenuously owned his timidity. The apprehension of losing his revenues, the reputation which he still enjoyed in the Court of Rome, and which he was loth to give up entirely, and possibly the fear of being excommunicated and proscribed, and perhaps poisoned or assassinated, might work together upon him, and restrain him from speaking freely concerning the controversies then agitated. However, to do him justice, he still maintained the truth, though cautiously and obliquely. Although he frequently censured Luther, yet he heartily wished that he might carry his point, and extort from

his enemies some reformation both of doctrines and manners ; but, as he could not imagine that Luther would succeed, he chose to adhere outwardly to the stronger party. " I follow," says he, " the decisions of the pope and the emperor, when they are right, which is acting religiously ; I submit to them when they are wrong, which is acting prudently ; and I think that it is lawful for good men to behave themselves thus, when there is no hope of obtaining any more."

" Le Clerc often censures Erasmus for his lukewarmness, timidity and unfairness, in the matter of the reformation, and I, as a translator, have adopted these censures, only softening them a little here and there : for I am, in the main, of the same opinion with Le Clerc as to this point. As Protestants, we are certainly much obliged to Erasmus ; yet we are more obliged to the authors of the Reformation ; to Luther, Melanchthon, Zuinglius, Oecolampadius, Cranmer, Bucer, &c.

" Erasmus shews at large, that whatsoever pains he had taken to keep upon good terms with the divines of Louvain, it had been impossible to gain their friendship ; and that some of them had cruelly deceived him, particularly Joannes Atensis, who was one of the most able and considerable persons amongst them. Then he makes a transition to Luther, and censures his violent proceedings ; as if Luther could have brought the Christian world to measures of reformation, in spite of the Romish court, without plain dealing and animated expressions ! He declares his hatred of discord to be such, that

he disliked even truth itself, if it was seditious. But Luther, who was of another humour, would have replied, such was his hatred for falsehood and oppression of conscience, that he thought it better to suffer persecution, if it arose, and to break loose from such a tyranny at all adventures, than to stoop down, and live and die under it, and hear a thousand lies vented and obtruded under the venerable name of Christian doctrines. They who are bold and resolute will approve these maxims of Luther, and they who are cautious and dispirited will close in with those of Erasmus. It must be acknowledged, that in this Luther acted rather more like an apostle, or a primitive Christian, than Erasmus. If the first Christians had been afraid of raising disturbances, they would have chosen to comply with the Sanhedrim, and to live at peace with their countrymen, rather than to draw upon themselves so much hatred. Some of the great, says Erasmus, meaning the king of Denmark, are of an opinion, to which I cannot assent, that the malady is too inveterate to be cured by gentle methods, and that the whole body must be violently shaken, before it can recover its health. If it be true, I had rather others should administer this strong physic than myself. Very well : but then we ought to respect and commend, and not to censure those, who have the courage and the constancy to do what we dare not practise."

(*To be continued.*)

With pleasure we extend the knowledge of the following very seasonable and just sentiments, which are clothed in a style of uncommon energy and eloquence.

ON LIBERALITY IN RELIGION.

(From the Christian's Magazine.*)

A WRITER of celebrity§ has said, that where "men are without some fundamental and scientific principles to resort to, they are liable to have their understandings played upon by cant phrases and unmeaning terms, of which every party in every country possess a vocabulary. We appear astonished when we see the multitude led away by sounds; but we should remember, that if sounds work miracles, it is always upon ignorance. The influence of names is in exact proportion to the want of knowledge."

As it is the truth of these remarks, which gives a point to their severity, it would be some consolation, were they applicable to the multitude only. But the same foible, though in a less degree, is discernible in men, who are not to be ranked with the

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* This is a new periodical work, published in the city of New York, quarterly. Its Editor is the Rev. Dr. MASON of that city, whose distinguished talents will doubtless command extensive patronage for his work, which, judging from this first No. will rank among the most respectable in the United States.

§ Paley, Pref. to his "*Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*." The above quotation must not be construed into a recommendation of his book. His merits, as a teacher of morals, we shall discuss hereafter.

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multitude; and to whom, if we cannot yield our confidence, we may not deny our respect. The influence of fashion is so subtle and so imperious; the levity of social intercourse is so adverse to reflection; dissent from the circling opinion is, for the most part, so ungraciously received; a fling, whether in jest or earnest, is so convenient a substitute for fact; and a popular epithet, without expense either of thought or knowledge, is so expeditious a mode of determining controversies, which otherwise would be of stiff debate, that the judgment is surprised through the imagination; and the mind is hurried into its decisions without firmness to resist, or leisure to pause. He who has access to that sort of company, which wears the reputation of intelligence, and does not recollect to have seen this course of things, has made a bad use of his eyes or his memory. How roughly individuals, communities, and even truth itself is often handled by such summary sentences, every writer on logic or ethics accounts it his duty to show. The design of this paper is not so much to dwell on the general evil of the practice, as, on the one side, to repel an opprobrium, and, on the other, to sift a claim, which it has been employed to sanction.

From the present state of society, we look back on the intolerance of former ages with a surprise, which does honour to humanity: but at the same time, it is to be feared, with a loftiness of self-complacency, which proclaims that the retrospect administers as much food to our vanity, as to our benevolence.

The pendulum of fashion vibrating in morals, as in dress, from an extreme point to its opposite ; we are now required to open the bosom of charity to every class of religious tenets, if we hope to be enrolled among *liberal* Christians, or to escape the pains and penalties decreed against *bigots*. As revolutions seldom happen in but one thing at a time, this exchange of feeling appears to have been accompanied with an exchange of principle ; and to have included a large portion of the *creed* of our fathers in the same proscription with their sternness of temper. So that what bishop Butler said of Christianity, may truly be said of orthodoxy :—"It is come—to be taken for granted, by many persons, that orthodoxy is not so much as a subject of inquiry ; but that it is now, at length, discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment ; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."* Or if dislike to principles once held sacred by the most enlightened and excellent of mankind, has not gone all this length, it has, at least, thrown them into the rubbish of obsolete prejudices. Zeal for their purity and propagation is supplanted by a sort of community of persuasions ; in which every one is not only privileged to assert his own right, while he lives in peace with his neighbours, but to demand their aid in repulsing an

* Butler's Analogy, Advertisement.

invader. Whoever shall dare to condemn the opinions of one, is the enemy of all the rest : he must be shunned as an intruder into the sanctuary of conscience ; as a stranger to religious civility and liberal refinement, and unworthy of any rank but that which philosophical Christianity has assigned to the *bigot*.

All this looks grand and magnanimous ; and, no doubt, has its effect ; especially upon youthful, undisciplined, and timid minds. But if it have more of show than of reality ; if it be as intolerant in its own way as any thing which it calls bigotry ; and if, under the pretext of oblations to charity, it sacrifice the truth of God and the eternal interests of men upon the altar of practical infidelity ; we cannot turn away from it with too open disgust, nor hold it in too deep abhorrence.

One of the things which first strike a critical observer, is the indefiniteness of the ideas attached to the terms "*liberal*" and "*bigoted*." It is easy to couple them with a man or a principle ; and to extol or decry accordingly : and few are so loud in their panegyric or abuse, as those who do both by signal. But still, what *is* your liberality ? Is it measured by any standard, or confined within any limits ? If not, for aught I can see, it is an attempt to abolish all intellectual and moral distinctions. If it is measured and limited—by what rule ? By the word of God ? Then you are bound to ascertain its sense, and to oppose every opinion which contradicts it ; or else you must contradict yourself : for a rule which you do not apply, is no rule at all.—By your own good pleasure, or your

conviction of right? Then you assume the office of dictator as much as any man to whom you impute that arrogance; and if you intend to "pluck the mote out of his eye," you must begin with taking "the beam out of your own."—By your particular associates? Every sect under heaven does the same. The Arminian calls the Calvinist a bigot; the Socinian applies the epithet to the advocate of the atonement, and chaunts forth his own liberality; the deist pities the slavish being who believes in revelation; and the atheist smiles at the "prejudices" of the deist.*—Or are you liberal because you think and speak well of those who think and speak well of you? So did the publicans, and so do thousands with whom you would not wish to be suspected of any connexion. If your "liberality takes a middle path between the contractedness of some men, and the licentiousness of others, so that while you cherish the primary interests of religion, you overlook the minor differences among its professors, and embrace them as brothers upon the broad ground of the common Christianity," you are indeed more definite, but not less embarrassed. For it is impossible not to perceive, *first*, that your very medium implies a boundary which you may not pass; and consequently, that your liberality is commendable,

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* *Il a encore quelques préjugés*, "he has some prejudices left," said the atheists of Paris, concerning David Hume, when he hesitated to shoot the gulf of atheism. He appears, however, to have got rid of his "prejudices," shortly after his acquaintance with these philosophers!

not for its own sake, but as it is controlled by truth: and *secondly*, that the character of your liberality must be fixed by the relative value of those points which it surrenders under the title of "minor differences." Until this be settled, you can have no permission to glory in being liberal; and to bestow contemptuous appellations upon those who will not go in your train: for you may take credit to yourself for that which shall turn out to be a crime.

Our next inquiry, then, respects these "minor differences." A soft sound with dreaded sense! For, unless the writer grievously err, the characteristic of the liberality now in vogue, is to ask nothing more than a *general* profession of Christianity; and to refer all its modifications to the head of "minor differences;" which, in the affair of Christian and ministerial fellowship, should make no difference at all. If, therefore, one of these liberal Christians shall explain away the whole faith of the church of God concerning the new birth—if another shall teach the dogma of universal salvation for men, and, if he please, for devils too—if a third shall give up the plenary inspiration of the scriptures—if a fourth shall argue against a particular providence—if a fifth shall deny the influences, or dispute the being, of the Holy Spirit—if a sixth shall abjure the sacrifice and deity of our Lord Jesus Christ: all this, instead of diminishing confidence, or communion, is to be a matter of compromise. Every one retains his own views without contradiction. The generic term "Christian"

belongs alike to all : and he who refuses to recognize their Christianity, must be branded as a bigot.

(To be continued.)

SERIOUS HINT TO PREACHERS.

IT is not always *the gospel* that is delivered from the pulpit. A man may preach very sensibly concerning the divine perfections, and the authority of God's government and laws. He may set forth the general obligations to duty and obedience. He may inculcate the amiableness of virtue in general, or of particular virtues, and may represent many worthy examples for men's encouragement and excitement. He may earnestly call on men to repent of their sins, and to reform the disposition of their hearts and their course of life. He may inculcate this with all the advantages of earnestness and action that would entitle him to the character of the complete orator. The composition may be very skilful, the language elegant and pathetic, and the preacher may be so greatly applauded, that it may sometimes be said, *He hath his reward*. Not only may the ears of the hearers be tickled, but their minds may be very agreeably entertained with sentiments that are in themselves just, and with many a good thought. Yet, in all this, there may be nothing by which a soul may be relieved and refreshed that labours and is heavy laden ; nothing by which a serious soul may be directed to the proper sources of sanctification. A discourse may have in it much

truth that is consistent with the gospel, and presupposed by it, and yet have nothing in it of the gospel, properly so called. Of such a discourse, with all its advantage of sentiments and expression, it may be said, as the apostle says of the law, that it is *weak through the flesh*. The corruption of nature, in which sin hath dominion, is too strong for philosophy, logic, and rhetoric ; too strong for refined speculation, strong argument, and the greatest oratory. *Miss. Mag.*

SHORT SENTENCES.

A CONSTANT seeking after heavenly wisdom, is no bad evidence of having already attained it.

To believe we have immortal souls, while we shew no concern about their eternal welfare, is to display our folly in the highest degree.

When a believer's trials come by the hand of man, a hard struggle may likely ensue, before he attain to a forgiving spirit.

To manifest a real concern for the good of a person's soul and body, in return for an injury received, is a clear evidence of a Christian spirit.

To be laying up for the body at the expense of the soul, is a piece of very unprofitable business.

Multitudes appear to live at ease in Sion, although they know that a wo is denounced in Scripture against them.

A conviction of gospel truth, joined to a disregard of it in the same person, gives a dreadful evidence of that person's state.

Ibid.

ANECDOTES.

—
OF MR. SHEPARD.

THE celebrated Mr. Shepard, on his death-bed, being visited by some of his younger brethren in the ministry, observed to them, "Your work is great, and calls for great seriousness." With respect to himself, he said, that the studying of his sermons very frequently cost him tears; that before he preached his sermons to others, he derived profit from them himself; and that he always went to the pulpit, as if he were immediately after to give up his account to his Divine Master.

—
OF AUGUSTINE'S MOTHER.

THE following anecdote of Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, when considered in connexion with his after conversion, affords great encouragement to pious parents to pray for their children.

It is thus related by Augustine himself, in the 3d book of his Confessions.

"I remember that she (my mother Monica) entreated a cer-

tain bishop to undertake to reason me out of my errors. He was a person not backward to attempt this, where he found a docile subject. But your son, said he, is too much elated at present, and carried away with the pleasing novelty of his error, to regard any arguments, as appears by the pleasure he takes in puzzling many ignorant persons with his captious questions. Let him alone; only continue praying to the Lord for him; he will in the course of his study discover his error. I myself, perverted by my mother, was once a Manichee, and read almost all their books; and yet at length was convinced of my error, without the help of any disputant. All this satisfied not my anxious parent; with floods of tears she persisted in her request, when at last he, a little out of temper, on account of her importunity, said, "Be gone, good woman; it is not possible that a child of such tears should perish." She has often told me since, that this answer impressed her mind as a voice from heaven."

Review of New Publications.

Mrs. Warren's History of the American Revolution.

(Concluded from p. 384.)

THE *History* of the events during the revolution is both interesting and entertaining, and will be read with pleasure by those, who can be satisfied without entering into the minutiae of

cruelty and carnage; and the devout mind will be gratified by the author's repeated acknowledgments of the superintending providence of God, and its frequent interpositions in our favour. But she seems to have occasionally forgotten that she was writing the history of the *American Revolution*, and has introduced narra-

tives, (and those rather copious) of transactions, which had no connexion with it. The conclusions of the 22d and 27th chapters are of this kind.

In vol. 3, p. 93, we have an instance of filial piety, such as is seldom met with, and perhaps the only one of the kind, which has ever occurred in the United States. On the death of Henry Laurens, Esq. "his only surviving son closed his eyes. His fond affection for his father led him to deviate from the usual customs of his countrymen in the manner of interring their friends. He reared an altar, on which he burned the body of the patriarch, and carefully gathered the ashes from the hearth, deposited them in a silver urn, and placed them in his bed-chamber, with reverence and veneration, where they remained to the day of his death. This circumstance is mentioned, as a peculiar instance of filial affection, and at once a mark of respect due to the memory of both the patriot and the parent."

This representation differs so widely from the impression made upon our minds at the time of the event, that we have been led to a review of the publications of that day, to see what was then said on this subject; and in the New-York Magazine for January, 1793, p. 64, we find "The following extract of a letter dated Charleston, (S. C.) Dec. 24, is copied from the Norwich Weekly Register, of Jan. 14.

"A few days since departed this life, Henry Laurens, Esq. about seventy years of age, and his corpse was burnt the third day after his decease. This was done by his son, at the request

of his father; who made this reserve in his will, "that unless his son complied with his request, he should be cut short of any of his estate," which was worth about 60,000*l.* sterling. The ashes remaining from the body were taken up, and put into a silver urn for that purpose. The reason that Mr. Laurens gave for this singular desire was, "that his body was too good to be eaten by worms." We pretend not to decide which statement is the more correct, but leave it to the reader to form his own opinion.

The work before us is "The History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution;" having reached the *termination*, we might be expected to stop; but "more *last words*" remain: ninety-nine pages of supplementary observations on events "*after the termination*" are yet before us; to which the following paragraph is an introduction.

"The narration of the revolutionary war between Great-Britain and her former colonies, brought down to its termination, leaves the mind at leisure for more general observations on the *subsequent consequences*, without confining it to time and place."

Amongst the "*subsequent consequences*" are enumerated "the insurrection in Massachusetts; a general convention of the States; the adoption of a new constitution; the choice of Gen. Washington as President; the treaty with Great Britain, negotiated by Mr. Jay; and Gen. Washington's second retreat from public life." Beside these, "banks; the funding system; the Cincinnati; the federal city; the *distribution of offices*; the French Revolution; scepticism;"

the importance of delegating suitable men for the administration of government ; the clergy ; the rights of man ; and the equal claims of mankind, have not been forgotten. "General observations" conclude the whole.

In the course of the work a great number of *characters* are drawn : in this the author has discovered much facility, but we are not sufficiently informed to be able to pronounce upon her accuracy. We think a freedom is used in some instances which a *gentleman* would not, perhaps, have thought prudent. After many remarks upon the characters and conduct of Gen. Washington and Mr. Adams, the reader is informed that

"The operations and the consequences of the civil administration of the first President of the United States, notwithstanding the many excellent qualities of his heart, and the virtues which adorned his life, have since been viewed at such opposite points, that further strictures on his character and conduct shall be left to future historians, after time has mollified the passions and prejudices of the present generation." Vol. III. p. 389. "The administration of his immediate successor we shall also leave." p. 391.

"The laborious statesmen, who with ability and precision defined the rights of men, and supported the freedom of their country ; without whose efforts America never would have had an army, are many of them neglected or forgotten." p. 418.

The historian has evidently aimed at being impartial ; but as she justly observes, "*complete perfection* is not to be attributed to man ; undue prejudices and partialities often imperceptibly creep into the best of hearts." We naturally feel for our friends, and it is not impossible that the following complaints extracted from "a letter to the author," written by a "very judicious

gentleman, during the administration of Gen. Washington," may have excited her sympathy, and upon some occasions influenced her pen.

"The President of the United States held the hearts of all America in his hand from the moment of his elevation to the command of her armies, to his honourable retirement to private life, and from his dignified retreat to his inauguration at New York. Placed in the executive chair by the united voice of all parties, it was expected the chief magistrate, whom flattery endows with all perfection, and to whom justice attributes many excellent qualities, would have felt himself above the partialities that usually hang about the human heart ; and that divesting himself of the little prejudices that obtrude, and frequently sully the greatest characters, he would have been of no party in his appointments, and that real merit, whether *federal* or *anti-federal*, would have been equally noticed.....Many of the people begin to inquire whether all the late energetic exertions were designed only to subserve the interests of a certain party, and to furnish salaries, sinecures, and extravagant compensations for the favourites of the army and the sycophants of power, to the exclusion of all who had not adopted the creed of passive obedience."

Our author's remark respecting the *clergy* is, that they "should keep within their own line, which directs them to enforce the moral obligations of society, and to inculcate the doctrines of peace, brotherly kindness, and the forgiveness of injuries, taught by the example of their divine Master, nor should they leave the appropriate duties of their profession to descant on political principles or characters." The remark is certainly just ; and if any of the gentlemen referred to have left "*the appropriate duties of their profession* to descant on political principles or characters," they de-

serve, and ought to receive censure ; but, at the same time, it must be observed, that the clergy possess rights, liberties, privileges, and property, in common with their fellow-citizens, and have an equal right to judge to whose care they may be best committed, and to express their opinion, as to the suitability of persons proposed : it is *their duty* to do so ; for their profession, as clergymen, does not exempt them from their duties as men ; and indeed it is easy to conceive that cases may occur, in which even their *duty*, as *clergymen*, would require their descanting, and descanting freely to, upon both political and religious principles and characters. The advice, however, is good ; and might with great propriety have been extended to other classes of the community, for we all have our " appropriate duties : " according to the apostle Paul, (Tit. ii. 3) even " aged women " have a sphere of usefulness ; and in his first epistle to Timothy, (chap. ii. 11, 12) he points out a part of the duty of women generally.

Upon the whole ; although we cannot bestow unqualified commendation on the work before us, nor agree with the author in every sentiment it contains, we have no hesitation in acknowledging that we have derived considerable pleasure, and, we hope, some profit, from a careful perusal of it.

A Sermon delivered by EZRA STILES ELY, on the first Sabbath after his Ordination. Hartford, Lincoln & Gleason. 1806.

THIS sermon is founded on

1 Cor. ii. 2, *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

The introduction, though on the whole, striking and appropriate, is yet in some instances exceptionable.

The writer's observations, respecting his early " resolution to be a minister of the everlasting gospel ; " and the time of his admission to the Christian church, and a few other remarks of a similar nature, though doubtless highly interesting to himself, would have better become another pen. Too much concerning " ourselves " is, on no occasion, either " proper " or " necessary."

After treating of the peculiar honour and happiness of those, who are used as instruments in the salvation of men ; the writer adds ;

" The man, who by the energy of the Holy Spirit, turns a sinner from the path of destruction into the way which leadeth unto everlasting life, shall cover a multitude of sins. But Alexander, having subdued what was then supposed *the world*, sat down and wept, because there was no other world in which he might display his military prowess."

The *last* clause of the sentence, to say nothing of its triteness, is not happily introduced. It neither illustrates nor enforces the *first*. Had he said " the man who turns a sinner from the path of destruction " &c. " shall shine as the brightness of the firmament," the contrast would have been proper. As it stands there is no contrast. Again,

" In the fulness of God's time, it is my humble hope, that I was in a sense prepared by the washing of regeneration, which opened my blind eyes, conquered the obduracy of my heart, and gave new motives, views, affections, and moral *habits* to the soul."

Habits are acquired, not given.

The writer then proceeds to methodize his subject. He first "considers what is implied in making known a crucified Saviour : and, secondly, what things are necessary to enable a gospel minister to accomplish the object of *such* a determination?"

"*Such* a determination?" No determination has been mentioned. Though the sense is easily discerned, the construction is incorrect. The first head is treated in the following judicious and natural manner.

"The messenger of God, who would make known nothing among his people, save Jesus Christ and him crucified, must devote himself to the study of the gospel, and preach it faithfully ; administer all the ordinances of Christ, and imitate, so far as he is able, the perfect example of his Divine Teacher."

The remarks respecting the importance of biblical literature, under the first subdivision, are clear and weighty.

The following is a pithy sentence.

"Let any man preach either Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or, what is more frequently the case, *himself*, but the Son of God, whose authority is supreme, whose doctrines [are] pure and perfect, whose life presents a spotless example of heaven-born morality."

It is a digression from the proposed method to exhort Christians and others, under the

third subdivision, "to profess the religion of Jesus, and celebrate his death, resurrection, ascension, and future judgment." Under the same section of discourse the following paragraph is selected, as a specimen of the writer's neat and comprehensive style.

"He [a Christian minister] must be indefatigable in his exertions to promote the best interests of mankind, patient under trials, persevering in his undertakings, firm in his purpose, gentle in his manner, meek in the instruction of opposers, a zealous assertor of the truth, holy in disposition, undefiled in his life, given to hospitality, wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove ; in short, Christ has left us an example, that we should follow his steps."

The paragraph immediately following is no less deserving of commendation on account of its peculiar justness and energy. It is too long for quotation. With pleasure the reader is referred to the discourse.

The extracts from Cowper, though pertinent, are too long for the occasion. A few lines, judiciously selected, would have been more impressive.

On the whole, the discourse is serious and appropriate, and we confidently hope will be introductory to a faithful and conscientious discharge of ministerial duties.

Religious Intelligence.

UNITED STATES.

Extract of a Letter from the President of the "Evangelical Society" in Vermont, Dec. 26, 1806.

"In footing my subscription, I found the amount \$1578,70.—It will

* See an account of this Society, *Panoplist*, No. 17, p. 237.

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H H h

be difficult for you, who are accustomed to a fulness of the means of doing good, fully to conceive of the benevolent joy and gratitude, which glowed in the countenance of every brother present, on being made acquainted with this unexpected bounty of the Great Head of the Church,

graciously conferred by the hand of liberal strangers. The Trustees could not forbear expressing, by vote, their lively sense of gratitude to all the recent benefactors of the Society. Particularly have they requested me to write to the Editors of the *Panoplist*, and some other gentlemen, distinguished on our subscription list, by their liberal patronage, and to present them the most grateful acknowledgments of the Trustees in behalf of the Society.

"Will you please, Sir, to present, affectionately, the thanks of the Trustees to the Editors of the *Panoplist*, and assure them of our sincere wishes, that their *Christian Armory* may be more abundantly strengthened and brightened, by all the pious and charitable uses to which it is applied. And that the liberal sum of \$100, which they have recently bestowed from the profits of their work, may, in future years, be returned a thousand fold, in the blessings of many, who have been ready to perish.

"The Trustees have resolved to recommend to the Society to put the greater part of the monies lately collected into a *permanent fund*; accordingly, the Treasurer, by their advice, has already loaned \$1000 for the present year. If by any of those unforeseen providences, which we have been recently experiencing, it should please the Great Head of the Church to rain into our Treasury about as much more, as we have already received, our wishes would seem to be almost consummated. We should then have a fund sufficient, with the annual tax of the Society, to support several young men constantly, in the uninterrupted pursuit of their studies.

"At the late meeting of the board they took under their patronage, two hopefully very pious, promising youth, with whom they were generally well acquainted. They had been for some time waiting the hand of Providence, and without property making some laudable exertions toward an education with a view to the ministry. We have now five youth in the different stages of education, besides Mr. Burge, who graduated last summer."

N. B. We expect shortly from the Trustees, a particular account of the constitution, proceedings and chari-

table patronage, of this very useful, infant, flourishing institution, which we shall with pleasure communicate to our readers. We fervently wish this Society may prove a thrifty nursery, whence many of the vacant churches in our numerous new settlements, may be supplied with pious, faithful and successful pastors.

To the Editors of the Panoplist.

GENTLEMEN,

The following extracts from a letter written by a worthy minister in the District of Maine, to a member of the Hampshire Missionary Society, are submitted to your disposal.

"WHILE your Missionary Society were pursuing their benign design of sending the gospel to the destitute, gratis, I entertained a secret but pleasing expectation, that God would bless you at home, and return your bread "cast upon the waters" with a thousand fold increase. And before ever I was well aware, save by anticipation, the thing is accomplished; and your eyes have seen, and your heart rejoiced at the accomplishment thereof. God is indeed a rewarder of those who lay out themselves and their interest for him. Blessed be his name forever and ever. He is God, the faithful God. Charge your dear children, and your dear flock, to express their gratitude to God in deep humility, and humble, persevering walking with God, in all his commands and ordinances.

"The blessed God, with respect to your local situation, and the vicinity, seems to have acted over again the scene of Gideon's fleece, which was filled with the dew of heaven, when the ground round about it was dry. Pray, pray mightily and perseveringly, that heavenly influence may graciously be continued to you and the places around you. If God withdraw from you suddenly (as he justly may) after such a sunshine of his Spirit and grace now with you, the darkness will, no doubt, be more sensibly felt, by discerning people, than ever heretofore. The calamity will reach to the heart and soul. May God by continuing your present great mercy, prevent such bitter calamity: and may the word of the Lord sound out from you to all around you, and in

every place your faith to God-ward be spread abroad.

"Humble, godly people, so far as I know, and I have made particular inquiry, receive your missionaries with open arms, houses, ears, and hearts. And I think their labour has not been in vain in the Lord. Except such as are some way influenced from party, I believe real friends of Christ and true religion, every where, in these parts, are highly pleased, and thankful to God for his mercy; and to you for your care about their souls, and your liberality in sending understanding, faithful missionaries among them, at your own expense. I regret there are so few contributions made to your society and missionaries among the friends of religion in these parts. But when we consider how long the ground of Maine has been uncultivated, we shall not be discouraged, because it does not as yet yield fruit equal to a watered garden, or fruitful field, which the Lord hath abundantly blessed. I pray you not to cease your pious care about poor Maine. You will reap in due season if you faint not. Your undertaking is such, that if you utterly fail of desired success, yet your reward is sure. The Master will be accountable for all your cost and labour of love to his glorious name and kingdom. What need I say more?"

With pleasure we extend the knowledge of the following interesting and useful document, which we copy from the Assembly's Magazine.

QUESTIONS

Put by Dr. Ashbel Green, chairman of the standing committee of missions, appointed by the general assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, in 1805: answered, by commission of the elders' conference of the unity of brethren, and in the name of the Brethren's Society for the furtherance of the gospel among the heathen, in London, by C. I. Latrobe.

Question.—How long has your society existed?

Answer.—The church of the United Brethren, or Unitas Fratrum, has existed ever since the year 1453,

when a company of truly pious persons, rejecting the corrupt doctrines and practices of the church of Rome, formed themselves into a congregation or church at Litiz, in Bohemia, first calling themselves, *Fratres Legis Christi*, and afterwards, being joined by others, in the same view, *Unitas Fratrum*.

Q. What were the circumstances that led to it?

A. The enmity and persecution of the Papists, and the ardent wish of the brethren, to serve the Lord and promote his cause according to the dictates of their consciences, and by a close adherence to the principles laid down in the word of God.

Q. What are your leading religious principles?

A. The Bible is the only source from whence the church of the brethren derive their doctrines. They maintain accordingly, that man is a lost and undone creature, fallen from God, and a slave to sin by nature, and that there is no other name given, by which he can be saved, but the name of Jesus. They are therefore "determined to know nothing among men but *Jesus, and him crucified*. They differ in no respect, in essentials, from those who ascribe our whole salvation to God's free grace and love, but never enter into disputes about controverted points, and in the words of the Scriptures, "*beseech all men to be reconciled to God*!"

Q. What obstacles or difficulties have you had to surmount?

A. The history of the church of the brethren exhibits a series of those difficulties and tribulations, experienced both by the church and by individuals, which our blessed Saviour foretold would be the lot of his followers. They have repeatedly suffered the most dreadful persecutions, and the enmity of the Papists was peculiarly directed against them. Both in ancient and modern times, they have been hated, reviled, and abused for Christ's sake.

Q. Have any opposed you by writings, or by government interest?

A. Perhaps no church has been more shamefully misrepresented and calumniated by writings and false reports. In ancient times, governments in popish countries have persecuted the brethren with the most bitter ani-

mosity; but with regard to Protestant governments, though enemies have frequently abused their influence with government, both in Germany and other parts of Europe, and even in England and America, to injure the brethren, they have not succeeded; and no opposition has been made, but rather much good-will shown by the different governments, under which the settlements of the brethren exist.

Q. What are your funds?

A. Chiefly the voluntary contributions of the members of the church. Each settlement in Christian countries endeavours to support itself; the missions depend entirely upon voluntary donations and subscriptions.

Q. What is the number of your missionaries?

A. In 1805, about 170 brethren and sisters were employed in the different missions of the brethren.

Q. Are they men of education or not?

A. They are not, in general, chosen from among men of letters, who, by their habits, are not so well fitted for the arduous service of our missions. This is proved by experience. There are therefore but few of that description among them. Persons, brought up to some trade, well versed in the Scriptures, and above all, having the grace of God in their hearts, and fervent zeal for the salvation of their fellow-men, but tempered with true humility of spirit, are found to be the most successful missionaries.

For the better management of the affairs of the brethren's missions, a *committee* is appointed by the general synods, (being a division of a conference or board of bishops and elders, chosen by the synods for the general superintendency of the church, and called the elders' conference of the Unity) which, in conjunction with the whole board, directs all missionary concerns. But as these are very extensive, societies have been formed in aid of the said committee. Such are, the brethren's society for the furtherance of the gospel among the heathen, in London; the society for the propagation of the gospel, established at Zeist, in Holland; another at Bethlehem, in Pennsylvania, and a fourth at Salem, in N. Carolina.* But

* The Rev. Mr. Loskiel, of Bethle-

all these societies act under a delegated authority.

Q. What instructions do you give your missionaries?

A. The brethren educate none of their people for the express purpose of being employed as missionaries, as they believe that that peculiar call must be from God himself, and that he is not confined to any human acquirements. But when the motives of a person offering himself for the work have been well examined, and found to be of a genuine kind, and he has been appointed to that service, he is admonished to make the Bible his chief study, to pray that the Spirit of truth would explain, and lead him into all the truth, that from the experience of his own heart, he may testify of the love of God, and invite lost men to come to Christ for salvation.

Q. What are the places to which you have already sent missions, and what other places do you contemplate for them?

A. To Greenland, Labrador, the back settlements of Pennsylvania, N. Carolina; to the West India islands—St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. Jan, Barbadoes, St. Kitts, Antigua, Jamaica, Tobago, (just now suspended); Paramaribo in S. America: to the Free Negroes, and Arawack Indians on the Corentyn; to the Hottentots at the Cape of Good-Hope, and to the Calmucks in Russian Asia near Astrachan. It may be easily conceived that to supply so many establishments with missionaries in succession, is as much as so small a church can do, as upwards of twenty vacancies, at an average, occur in a year. New missions therefore are not just now in contemplation, though many offers are continually made to the brethren for that purpose.

Q. What has been your success hitherto?

A. The brethren have laboured

hem, informs the committee, that the fellowship at Salem, N. Carolina, is not a distinct society, but belongs to the incorporated society for the propagation of the gospel among the heathen, established at Bethlehem, Northampton county, Pennsylvania. Hence it appears that they have but three societies: one at London; one at Zeist, in Holland; and another at Bethlehem, in N. America.

with various success, in different places and at different times. The most successful missions of the brethren are at present, in Greenland, St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. Jan, Antigua, St. Kitts, and among the Hottentots at Bavianskloof.

Q. What are your hopes and prospects for the future?

A. We have good hopes, that God will, as hitherto, continue to bless and make use of the brethren, though a weak and poor congregation, as instruments in his hand, for the promotion of his cause. Past experience fully justifies the most unbounded confidence in the Lord's help, and the most lively exercise of faith, even where, at present, little fruit is seen.

Q. What advice can you give us?

A. If you wish for advice of such, who, by long experience, have become, in some degree, acquainted with the subject, you will find the church of the brethren always willing to lay the result of their experience before you, sincerely wishing, that the Lord may still more abundantly bless and crown *your* labours, and the measures *you* may adopt for the conversion of the heathen, with success. There are so many points, upon which advice may be asked and given, that it would exceed the bounds of a letter to touch upon them all. Only a few remarks are submitted to your consideration:

It is of the greatest consequence, that we ourselves are intent upon doing whatsoever we do in the name of God, and solely with a view to His glory, and not suffer ourselves to be swayed by our own spirit or prejudices. He will answer the prayers of his servants, if they are desirous to follow *his* direction in all things.

In the choice of missionaries we ought to be very cautious, and well to examine the motives and character of the candidates.

We think it a great mistake, after their appointment, when they are held up to public notice and admiration, and much praise is bestowed upon their devotedness to the Lord, &c. presenting them to the congregation as martyrs and confessors, before they have even entered upon their labours. We rather advise them to be sent out quietly, recommended to the fervent prayers of the congregation, which is likewise most agreeable to their own

feelings, if they are humble followers of Christ.

We give them every needful instruction for the preservation of their health, as well as we are able to procure it.

As we wish, above all things, that brotherly love be maintained among fellow-labourers, we therefore do not advise to place two men of different religious opinions and habits, however worthy in other respects, under one yoke.

When converts from among the heathen are established in grace, we would advise not immediately to use them as assistants in teaching, but to act herein with caution, and a reference to the general weakness of their minds, and consequent aptness to grow conceited.

We also disapprove of bringing converts to Europe under any pretence whatever, and think it would lead them into danger of harm to their own souls.

Missionaries are no longer useful, than as they are with *their whole heart* in their calling, and we advise to employ or retain none, but such as delight in their work.

We advise, that where more are employed, one of approved character and experience be appointed *first missionary*, to superintend the work, and that each prefer the other in love, and be willing to follow.

Nothing more need be added, for all who seek counsel, help and support from God our Saviour himself, will be led through his grace into the *right way*, and the best mode of planting and watering. It is He alone who giveth the increase, to whom be all the glory. Amen.

CHR. IGN. LATROBE,

Secretary of the United Brethren in England.

London, Nov. 28th, 1805.

Extract of a letter from a respectable Gentleman at Calcutta, dated Aug. 7, 1806.

"THE missionaries in this country, concerning whom you inquired, are in general, respectable men. Their head, Mr. Carey, is a wonderful man. As an oriental scholar, I mean in the knowledge of languages, he leaves the celebrated Sir William Jones behind him. He is professor of the Sanscrit, the holy language of the

Brahmins, in the College of Fort William. Indefatigably industrious; mild in his temper, and yet dignified in his manners, he seems admirably qualified as a minister of Christ, and an agent for the propagation of his holy gospel.

"The subscription has been nobly supported in this country. The Rev. Dr. Buchanan, a high churchman, and a clergyman of great integrity and ability, has so favourable an opinion of these missionaries, that he subscribed 5000 rupees towards carrying on their translation of the Bible.

The society is wealthy, but I can venture to say that they devote their wealth to the purpose for which generous and pious men have deposited it in their hands. The missionaries live together at Serampore, and keep a school, which defrays their private expenses. I do sincerely esteem them as a body of men, and, being personally acquainted with some individuals, I know that the purity of their private lives accords with the sanctity of their public ministrations. They are ana-baptists."

List of New Publications.

A Letter to the inhabitants of the city and state of New York; on the subject of the commerce of the western waters. By Agricola. New York. S. Gould. pp. 40. 12mo.

The Beauties of the Evangelical Magazine. 2 vols. 8vo. W. W. Woodward. Philadelphia.

The village Sermons, in two neat vols, 12mo. of about 350 pages each, price \$2. Containing 52 plain and short discourses, on the principal doctrines of the gospel, intended for the use of families, Sunday schools, or companies assembled for religious instruction in country villages. By George Burder, D. D. of London. W. Woodward. Philadelphia.

The Arts and Sciences abridged, with a selection of pieces from celebrated modern authors, calculated to improve the manners and refine the taste of youth; particularly designed and arranged for the use of schools. By Charles Pierce, compiler of the American Citizen, Portsmouth Miscellany. 12mo. pp. 216. Portsmouth, N. H. Pierce & Gardner.

Elements of Useful Knowledge. vol. 3d. By Noah Webster, Esq. 12mo. pp. 300. \$1.50.

A Sermon, delivered Nov. 3, 1806, at the funeral of Mrs. Mary Yates, consort of the Rev. Andrew Yates, who died October 31st. By Abel Flint. Hartford. Hudson & Goodwin.

A Sermon, delivered Nov. 20, at the dedication of the brick meeting house, in the north parish in Danvers. By Benjamin Wadsworth, A. M. Salem. Joshua Cushing.

The poetical works of David Hiccock, comprising, The Shade of Plato, or a defence of religion, morality, and government; in four parts. Al-

so, The Knight and Quack, or a looking glass for impostors in physic, philosophy, and government. Together with, The Subtlety of Foxes, a fable. Boston. Etheridge & Bliss.

Genuine Religion, the best friend of the people; or the Influence of the Gospel, when known, believed, and experienced, upon the manners and happiness of the people. By Archibald Bonar, A. M. J. How. Charlestown. 1807.

The Wanderer in Switzerland, and other poems. By James Montgomery. 12mo. New York. S. Stansbury.

Love: A Poem, delivered before the E. E. branch of the non descript club. By the H. C. Newburyport. Feb. 1807. E. W. Allen.

Life of the Hon. Charles James Fox. Interspersed with a great number of original anecdotes. By B. C. Walpole, Esq. N. York. E. Sargeant.

The Christian Monitor, No. 4. Containing nine discourses on relative duties. And reasons for believing the truth of divine revelation. Munroe & Francis. Boston.

Sobriety, watchfulness and prayer, illustrated and urged, in a farewell sermon, delivered, Waterbury, Conn. Dec. 21, 1806. By Holland Weeks, A. M. late pastor of the first church in said place. New Haven. Oliver Steele & Co. 1807.

PROPOSED FOR PUBLICATION.

A complete history of the Holy Bible, as contained in the Old and New Testaments, including also the occurrences of four hundred years, from the last of the prophets to the birth of Christ, and the life of our blessed Saviour and his apostles, &c. with copious notes, critical and ex-

planatory, practical and devotional. From the text of the Rev. Laurence Howel, A. M. with considerable additions and improvements, by the Rev. George Burder, author of the Village Sermons, Notes to Pilgrim's Progress, &c. Conditions. 1. To be printed on a handsome type and good paper, in two neat octavo volumes—and not three, as mentioned in the proposals. 2. To be neatly bound and lettered, and delivered to subscribers at \$2,25 per vol. 3. Each volume to be delivered and paid for as published, and one copy given for every five sets subscribed for...If subscribers' names are sent forward by the 1st of July, 1807, they will be printed in the second volume. Woodward. Philadelphia.

A Theological Dictionary, containing definitions of all religious terms; a comprehensive view of every article in the system of divinity; an impartial account of all the principal denominations which have subsisted in the religious world, from the birth of Christ to the present day. Together with an accurate statement of the

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A view of the economy of the church of God, as it existed in its primitive form, under the Abrahamic dispensation and the Sinai law; and as it is perpetuated under the more luminous dispensation of the gospel; particularly in regard to the covenants. By Samuel Austin, A. M. minister of the gospel in Worcester, Massachusetts. Thomas & Sturtevant. Worcester.

Ordination.

ON the 18th inst. was ordained over the church and society in Milton, Rev. SAMUEL GILE. The ecclesiastical council consisted of ministers and delegates from the Congregational churches in Andover, south parish, Danvers, first parish, Ipswich, first parish, Bedford, Charlestown, Dorchester, Roxbury, Dedham, Quincy and Randolph. The exercises were performed in the following order. The introductory prayer by Rev. Thomas Thacher of Dedham; Rev. Samuel Stearns of Bedford preached the sermon from Rev. ii. 10. "*Be thou faithful unto*

death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Rev. Jabez Chickering, of Dedham, made the consecrating prayer. Rev. Benj. Wadsworth, of Danvers, was moderator of the council, and gave the charge; Rev. Joshua Bates, of Dedham, gave the right hand of fellowship; Rev. David T. Kimball, of Ipswich, made the concluding prayer. The exercises were appropriate and impressive; and though the weather was very unpleasant, the assembly was large and respectable; and all things were conducted decently and in order.

Obituary.

ON Thursday, Jan. 15, 1807, deceased Mrs. ELIZABETH K. GREEN, consort of the Rev. Dr. GREEN, of Philadelphia, in the 49th year of her age.

Mrs. Green was a woman of uncommon excellence. Her death, though not distinguished by signal displays of triumphant faith and hope, approaching to vision and enjoyment; yet deserves special notice, as it was the termination of a life which, on

account of its Christian virtues, is entitled to the honour of being proposed as a model, especially to all placed in a similar station. To say that she was faithful to her husband, affectionate to her children, and kind to her domestics, would be giving her common praise. Her memory merits more.

Endowed with an understanding sound, correct, and improved; possessing a native sense of propriety,

remarkably discriminating; blest with a mind uncommonly firm, and adorned with the graces of Christianity; she was admirably qualified for that sphere to which Providence had called her by marriage, and discharged the duties of it with singular fidelity and acceptance. Anxious for the character and usefulness of her husband, as a minister of the gospel, she assumed the whole burden of domestic affairs, which she conducted with great prudence and economy; and by her assiduous attentions to the people of his charge, contributed to gain him that high standing in their affections which he so deservedly holds. In her deportment she was dignified, condescending and complacent; equally acceptable to every class of that numerous and respectable religious society to which she was related. The poor loved her for her affability; the rich courted her on account of the peculiar charms of her conversation. Her attentions in company were so kind and unwearied, that all present received a share; and her manners were so admirable and captivating, that few left her society without being ready to unite in her praise. Persons of every description, in that large circle of acquaintance in which she moved, were delighted with this excellent woman, who could, with such facility, accommodate her conversation to their various tastes.

The sickness, which terminated the life of this invaluable woman, was long and painful. Alternately exciting hope, and awakening fear, as to its issue, it was calculated to try her faith and patience. Her pains, often severe, she bore with Christian submission and fortitude. During her last confinement, her views of herself were very humble and abasing; but

she was supported by a steady faith in the all-sufficient merits of Jesus Christ, and by a consoling confidence of having that love to God which is the sure product and certain evidence of genuine faith. At a time when her relatives and friends were flattering themselves with hopes of her recovery, in an unexpected moment, she, very suddenly, expired.—But they sorrow, not as those who have no hope. Under the greatness of their loss, they are consoled by an humble confidence that she fell asleep in Jesus, and that her spirit, in the mansions of blessedness, waits in joyful hope, for the resurrection of the body to immortal life. *Assembly's Mag.*

At Barnstable, on the 13th inst. the Rev. OAKES SHAW, pastor of the first church of Christ in that place, the duties of which important situation he discharged during the space of forty-six years, with the utmost degree of Christian pleasure, fortitude and zeal. His life was marked with the whole train of Christian virtues; it was his comfort and delight to administer the balm of divine consolation to the afflicted spirits; ever present in the hour of distress, and ready at the call of sorrow, he was the messenger of hope to the despairing, of consolation to the sorrowful, and of heavenly light to those, who walked in darkness.—As his life was one continued scene of piety and devotion, so his death was calm and serene. It was not the struggle of dissolving nature, but the calm repose of peace; and secure that the Master he had served in life, would not desert him in death, he expired with a smile of pleasure on his countenance, after a pilgrimage of 70 years.

At Cambridge, Mrs. MARY, wife of Rev. HENRY WARE, D. D.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A Christian of the ancient school, is entitled to our warmest thanks for his two excellent and seasonable letters on the doctrine of the atonement of Christ. Seldom have we seen this fundamental doctrine of our religion explained and defended in a more clear and forcible manner.

W. on the affinity between the languages of Europe and Asia, is learned, ingenious, and evinces deep research into ancient and modern languages. It shall enrich the *Miscellaneous* department in our next number.

We have not yet received from our esteemed correspondent Z. his promised sketch of the life of Rev. William Cooper. Our *biographical* correspondents are requested to forward their communications early in the month.

J. C.'s Thoughts on Gal. iii. 19, 20, are received and on file.